

DC

CHALLENGERS

20c

CHALLENGERS
OF THE UNKNOWN

NO. 79
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UNKNOWN

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JOE
KUBER

**"THE
MONSTER
MAKER!"**

Super

BODYBUILDING COURSE —

INTRODUCING

THE BODYBUILDING SYSTEM THAT GUARANTEES —
**YOU'LL PUT ON INCHES OF POWERFUL
MUSCLES ON YOUR BODY!**

At last, NEW bodybuilding secrets are now available for your use. Finally, after years of experimenting we have come up with the fastest muscle building system in the world. Our course really works — **thousands** have taken our course and have obtained fantastic results. Right in the privacy of your own bedroom, you can completely transform your body.

SEE YOUR MUSCLES GROW DAY BY DAY!

You can have **POWERFUL MUSCLES FAST** . . . not by years and years of hard work . . . but by simply following our fascinating system . . . a system that works so fast you can see results from day to day! Isn't that the kind of course you want? We absolutely guarantee results.

HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE LETTERS WE HAVE RECEIVED —

"Wow! I'm making fantastic gains, following your new method of muscle building. I never knew it could be so easy to build muscles." J. Johnson

"In just 3 weeks I have gained 1½" on my arms and 4" on my chest. I have also lost 4" off my waist. Your course is just great!" D. Roberts

"I was a skinny weakling when I enrolled, now I've gained 30 pounds in just 45 days. I am truly amazed. I'm going to be dynamite on the beach." B. Abbott

"I'm transforming all the fat off my body and changing it into rock-hard muscle. It's amazing — I have lost 8" off my waist. I can actually see my muscles growing from day to day." P. Williams

"I have gained 20 pounds in just 30 days and I have gained over 6 inches on my chest. I find that my power has doubled. In sports I am a winner in everything I do." B. Daniels

"I have gained 5" on my arms and 12" on my chest, while losing 3" off my waist. I have tripled my power and speed. Thanks for what you have done for me!" M. Robinson



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TAKE YOUR CHOICE! You Can Do This...

- ★ **DOUBLE OR TRIPLE YOUR STRENGTH** in record time! It wouldn't take long before you can perform feats of strength.
- ★ **BUILD HUGE — GIANT SIZE** muscles — fast. You'll have bulging muscles before you know it.
- ★ **TRIM YOUR WAIST** by following ultra-modern methods. It won't take long before your waist shows washboard abdominal muscles.
- ★ **GAIN WEIGHT** — You can actually gain up to 50 pounds of rock-hard muscle.
- ★ **LOSE FAT** — You'll find it easy to get rid of excess fat and replace it with muscle.
- ★ **FEEL 100% BETTER** — You can't help but feel great once you own a muscular body.

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Box 485, Dept. S
Dearborn, Mich. 48121

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Name _____ Age _____

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MAIL TODAY



CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN

AN EXPERIMENTAL MACHINE HAD GIVEN A CRIMINAL FANTASTIC POWERS... POWERS THAT STAGGER MAN'S IMAGINATION! FOR HE COULD, AT WILL, PRODUCE AWESOME DRAGONS, GIGANTIC APES-- IN FACT, ALL THINGS POSSIBLE FOR THE HUMAN MIND TO CONCEIVE! AND EACH OF THESE OMINOUS ENEMIES, SPAWNED BY A THWARTED BRAIN, HAD TO BE DEALT WITH BY THAT FAMED FOUR--

SOME, THE CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN, BEFORE THEY COULD HOPE TO DEFEAT...

The **MONSTER MAKER**



ROC HAS CREATED ANOTHER AWESOME CREATURE IN HIS MIND--AND IT'S COME TO LIFE! TAKE COVER!

By **JACK KIRBY**

FROM CHALLENGERS #2 (JUNE-JULY, 1958).

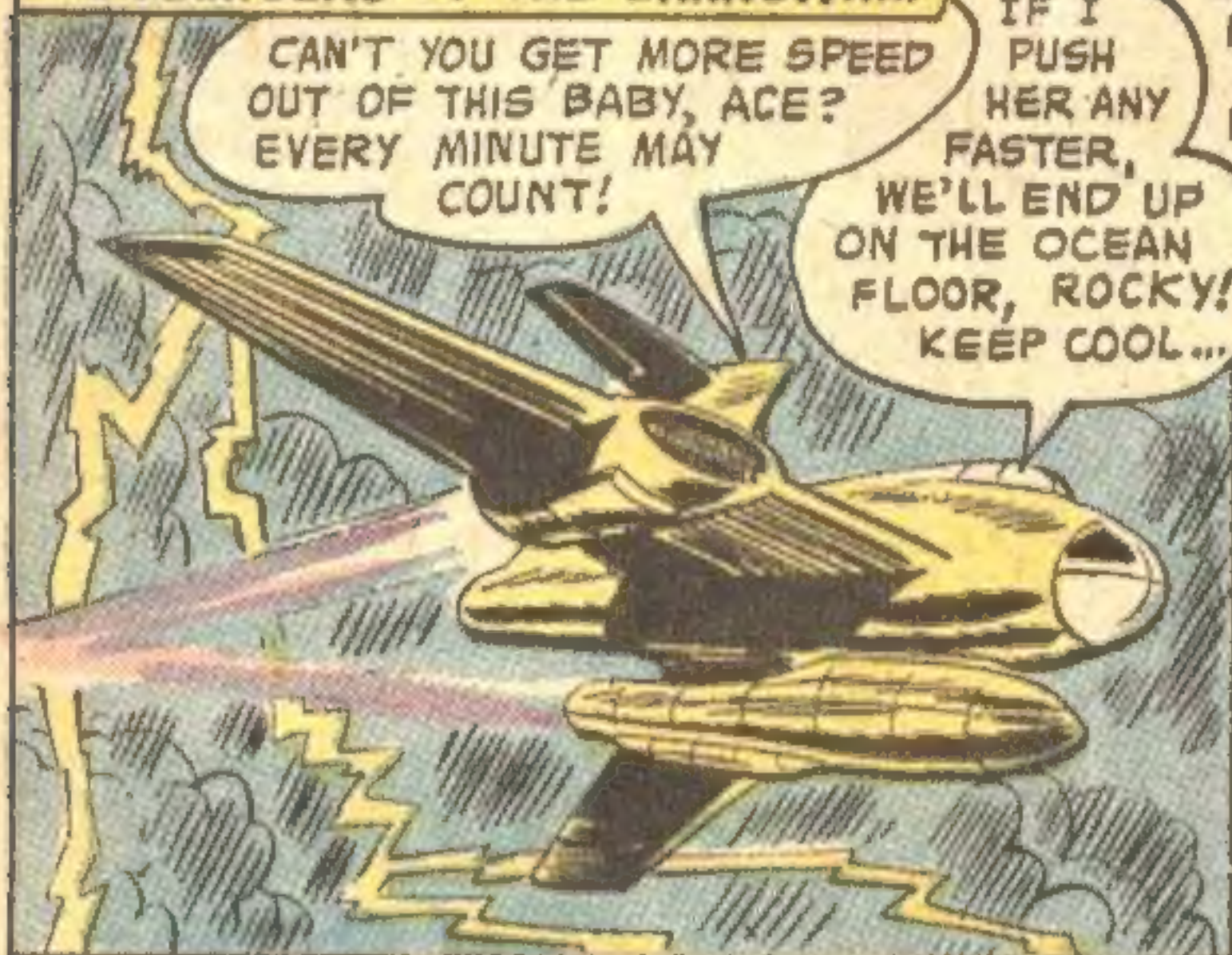
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A TWIN JET KNIFES THROUGH A CRACKLING LIGHTNING STORM HIGH OVER THE CARIBBEAN-- AND WITHIN THE PLANE, A TENSE TEAM... THE CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN...

CAN'T YOU GET MORE SPEED OUT OF THIS BABY, ACE? EVERY MINUTE MAY COUNT!

IF I PUSH HER ANY FASTER, WE'LL END UP ON THE OCEAN FLOOR, ROCKY! KEEP COOL...



MAYBE WE'RE IN A SWEAT OVER NOTHING... MAYBE THAT UNDERWORLD RUMOR IS ALL WET, AND ROC *ISN'T* HEADING FOR DR. HASCOMB'S ISLAND LAB!

PERHAPS, RED, BUT ROC'S MANIACAL MIND HAS DRIVEN HIM TO GREAT LENGTHS IN THE PAST TO FIND SOME POWER, SOME WEAPON, TO CONQUER THE WORLD...



PROF'S RIGHT! IT FIGURES THAT A CRIMINAL LIKE ROC WOULD TRACK DOWN A MAN OF DR. HASCOMB'S SCIENTIFIC GENIUS-- ESPECIALLY SINCE HASCOMB'S BEEN WORKING ON A SECRET, ALL-POWERFUL WEAPON...

THERE'S OUR ISLAND... AT SIX O'CLOCK! WE'RE HERE!



THE WHINING JETS CUT OUT ON A SANDY BEACH-- AND ACE MORGAN, ROCKY DAVIS, PROF HALEY AND RED RYAN BOUND FROM THEIR PLANE, UNAWARE THAT THEY ARE ON THE THRESHOLD OF ANOTHER STARTLING ADVENTURE INTO... THE UNKNOWN!

I'LL BREATHE A LITTLE EASIER WHEN WE FIND DR. HASCOMB SAFE AND SOUND!

I SPOTTED HIS LAB FROM THE AIR! IT'S INLAND A FEW HUNDRED-- HEY... LOOK!



WOW! THE LAB'S ENVELOPED IN A RAINBOW-LIKE HALO! AND THAT EAR-SPLITTING SOUND... MUST BE ANOTHER OF HASCOMB'S EXPERIMENTS!

I HOPE IT ISN'T FOR THE BENEFIT OF A CRIMINAL NAMED ROC! LET'S GET OVER THERE-- FAST!

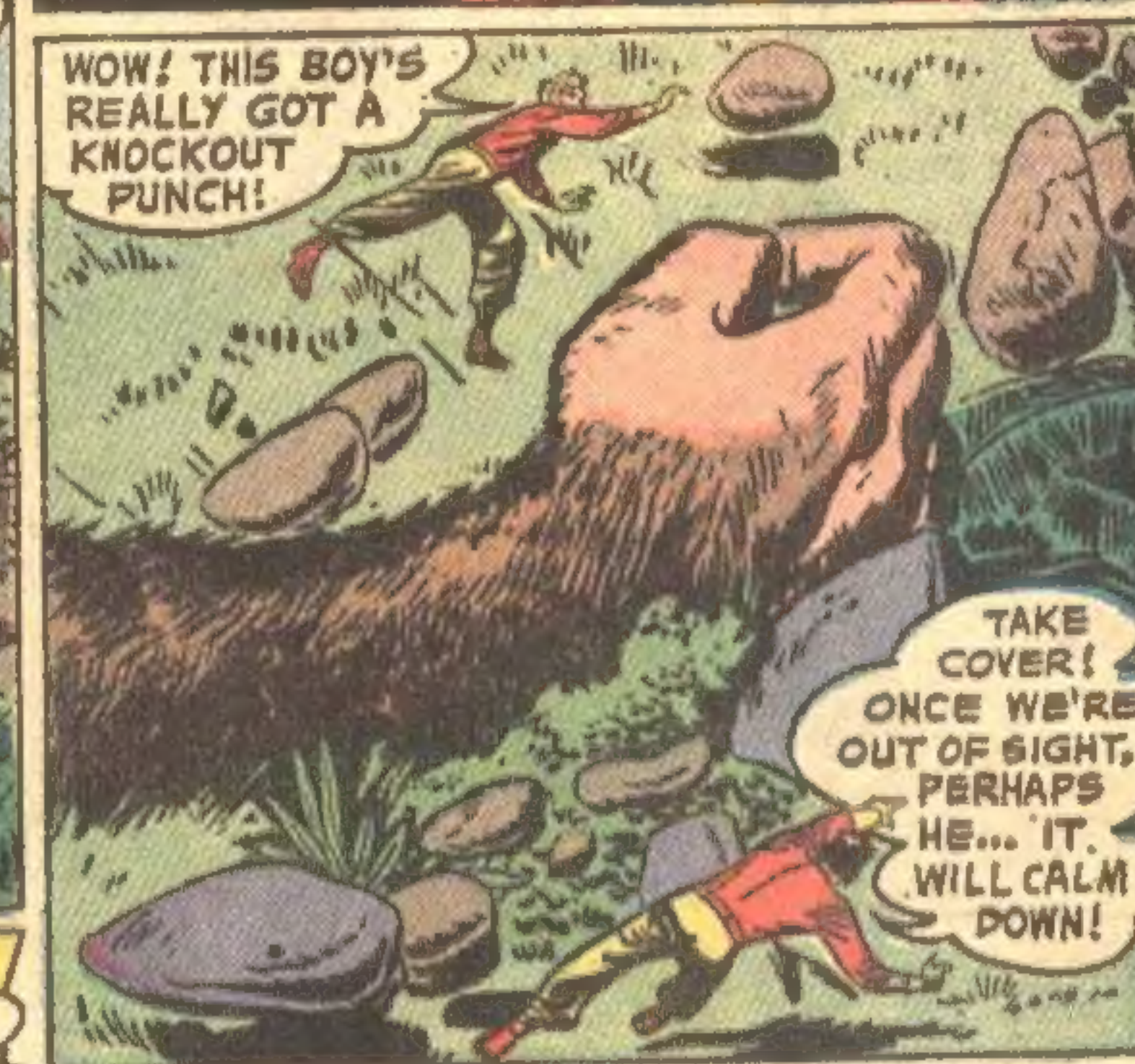


RACING INLAND, THE COURAGEOUS MEN, WHO DAILY DEFY DEATH AGAINST OVERWHELMING ODDS, COME TO AN ABRUPT STOP WHEN THEY SEE...

ROC! AND THAT'S DR. HASCOMB ON THE LAB FLOOR!

HE'D BETTER BE BREATHING FOR YOUR SAKE, ROC! NOW, SURRENDER! IT'S FOUR AGAINST ONE-- YOU HAVEN'T A MONKEY'S CHANCE!





AND AS THE FRANTIC FOUR EXIT FROM THE WATER, A SHORT DISTANCE DOWNRIVER...

HE'S MOVING THIS WAY... AND LEVELING THE WHOLE JUNGLE! WE HAVE NO WEAPONS THAT CAN STOP THAT MONSTER!

BUT SOME CLEVER BRAINWORK MIGHT, ROCKY! LOOK OVER THERE...

I DON'T SEE ANYTHING, EXCEPT A CLIFF AND A SMALL CAVE ENTRANCE, PROF!

AND THAT MIGHT DO THE TRICK, ROCKY! LET'S GET TO WORK... WE'VE GOT TO CAMOUFLAGED THAT CLIFF BEFORE "BIG BOY" ARRIVES HERE!

SHORTLY, AS THE UNBELIEVABLE HULK LUMBERS INTO VIEW...

HEY, YOU BIG BABOON -- WE'RE DOWN HERE!

YOU'VE CAUGHT HIS ATTENTION-- GET SET, EVERYONE...

GRRROOHHH

THIS BETTER WORK... OR WE'LL FIND OURSELVES TRAPPED!

INTO THE CAVE-- HURRY!

THE CHALLENGERS MOVE CAUTIOUSLY FROM THE CAVE, TO BEHOLD STILL ANOTHER STARTLING SIGHT...

THE BEAST'S FADING... DISAPPEARING BEFORE OUR EYES! I--I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

NEITHER DO I, ACE... THIS MYSTERY IS ONE OF OUR GREATEST CHALLENGES!

PERHAPS DR. HASCOMB CAN ENLIGHTEN US... IF HE'S STILL ALIVE!

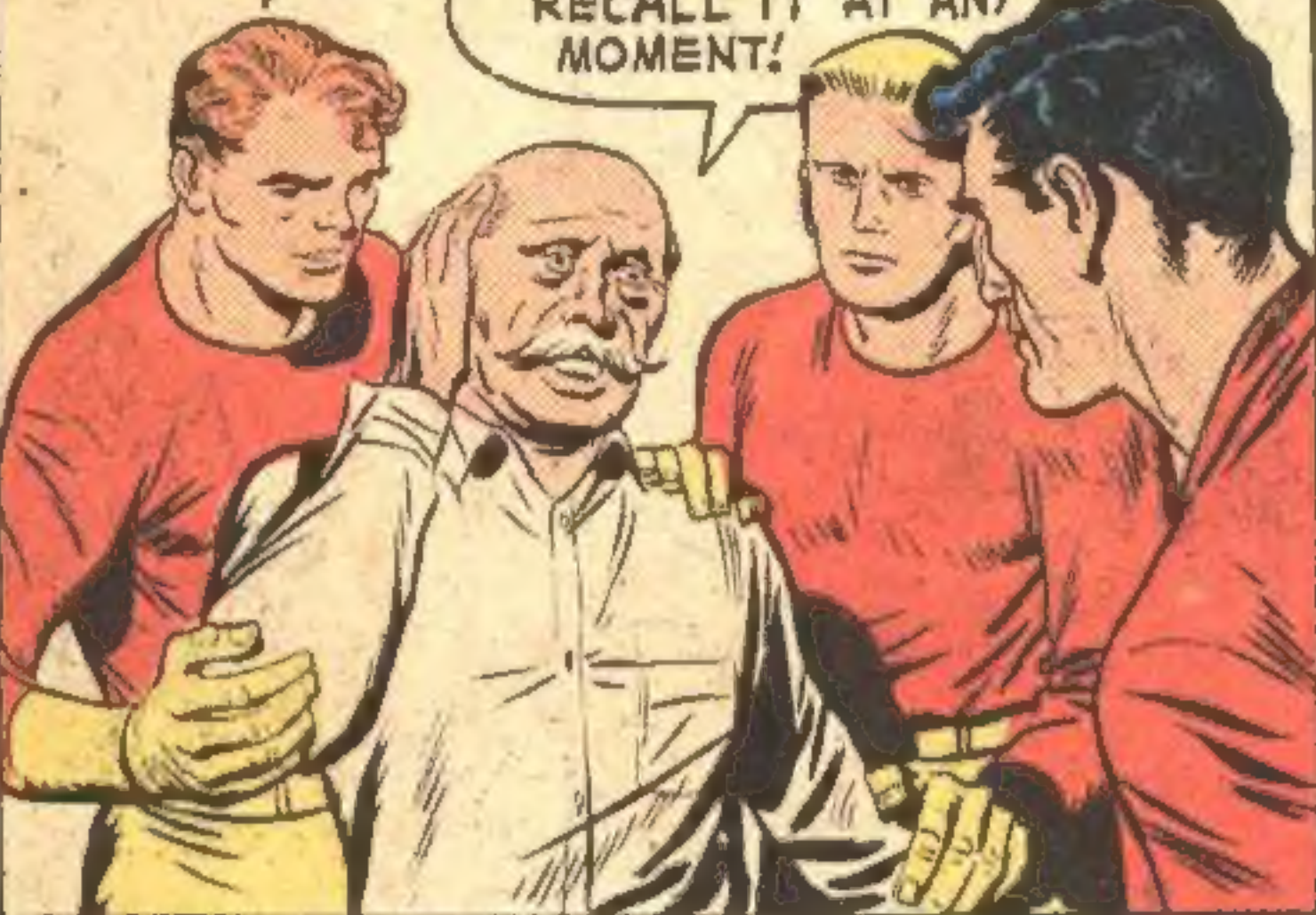
WHEW! IF HE DIDN'T KNOCK HIMSELF OUT, HE'S GOING TO HAVE ONE BIG HEADACHE!

HE'S TOPPLING OVER!

HURRYING BACK TO THE LAB, THE PUZZLED
FOURSOME COMES UPON... LATER... LATER!

DR. HASCOMB... YOU'RE
OKAY! WHAT'S GOING
ON AROUND HERE?

RIGHT NOW, I NEED
YOUR IMMEDIATE HELP!
ROC HAS FORGOTTEN
SOMETHING, AND MAY
RECALL IT AT ANY
MOMENT!



INDEED, AT THIS VERY MOMENT, IN AN ISLAND COVE...

HASCOMB'S THOUGHT MACHINE! IN MY
HASTE TO LEAVE, I FORGOT TO DESTROY
IT! IF I AM TO BE THE ONLY MAN IN
THE WORLD WITH THIS GREAT POWER,
THEN IT MUST BE DONE! THERE'S
NO NEED TO RETURN, EITHER...



HA, HA... HO, HO, HO...
ALL I NEED DO IS
THINK OF THE BEST
WAY TO DESTROY IT...
HA, HA, HA...



AND A SECOND LATER,
BACK AT THE LAB...

TH-THANK
GOODNESS...
WE SAVED THE
EQUIPMENT!

THE LAB WAS
DESTROYED--
JUST AS YOU
PREDICTED,
DR. HASCOMB!
AND NOW, WON'T
YOU PLEASE TELL US
WHAT THIS NIGHTMARE
IS ALL ABOUT?



AFTER A FANTASTIC STORY UNFOLDS FROM THE
LIPS OF DR. HASCOMB...

IT'S INCREDIBLE!
YOU SAY, THIS
MACHINE HAS
THE POWER
TO TRANSFORM
A MAN'S
THOUGHTS
INTO MATTER?

EXACTLY, PROF! AFTER ROC
FORCED ME TO GIVE HIM A
THOUGHT MACHINE TREATMENT,
HE CONCEIVED THAT GIGANTIC
APE IN A MENTAL IMAGE,
AND IT TOOK FORM!



THEN...THE DESTRUCTION
OF YOUR LAB BY THAT
MISSILE MUST HAVE
BEEN A THOUGHT
PICTURE IN ROC'S
MIND, TOO!

PRECISELY, ACE! AFTER THE
TREATMENT, ROC SHOT ME...
BUT, FORTUNATELY, HIS
BULLET ONLY GRAZED MY
TEMPLE--AND YOU BOYS
ARRIVED ON THE SCENE
BEFORE HE
COULD
DESTROY THE
MACHINE!

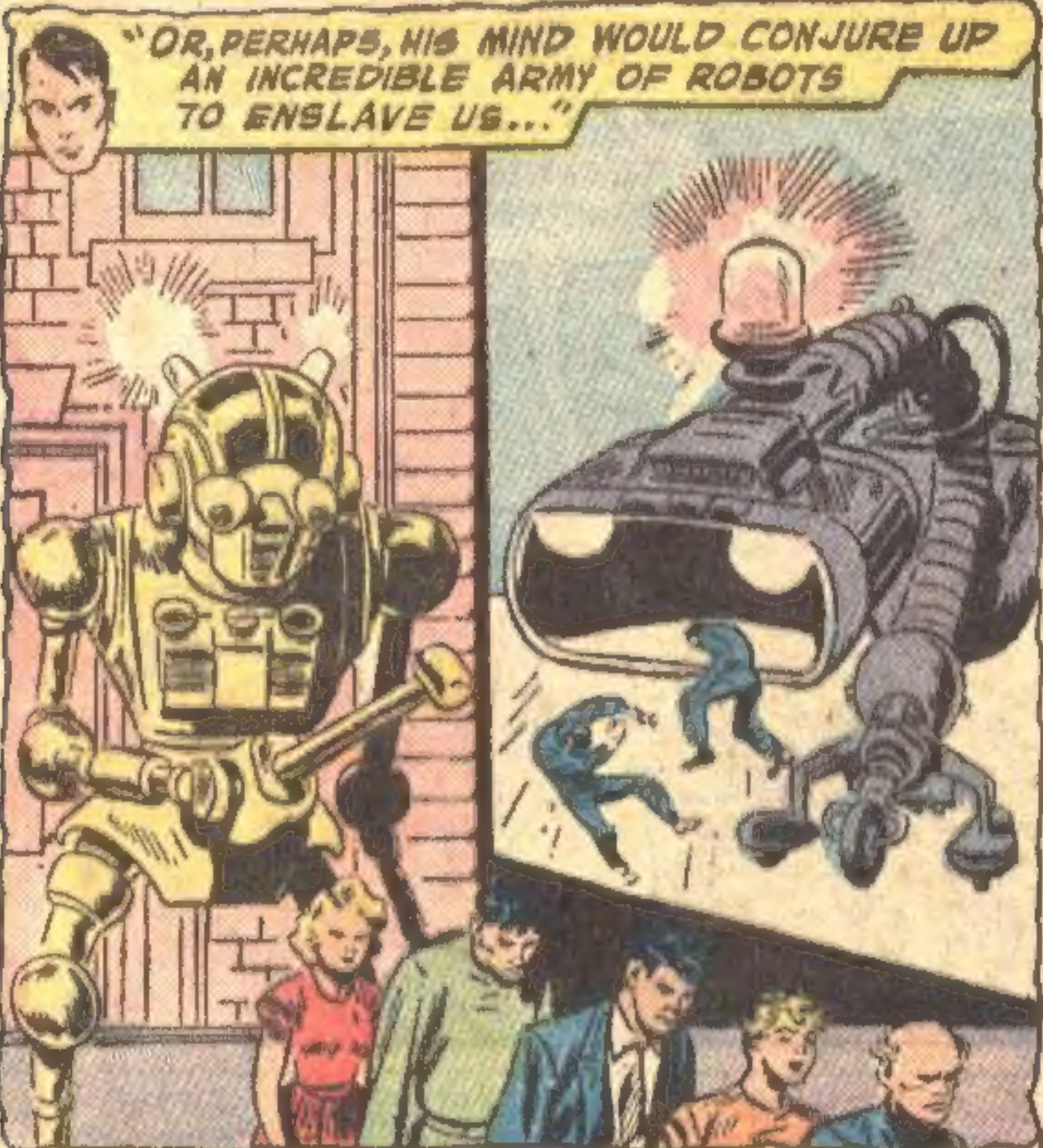




SUCH AN AWESOME POWER IN THE HANDS OF A PERSON LIKE ROC IS TERRIFYING, MEN! THINK OF WHAT HE CAN DO TO FURTHER HIS EVIL ENDS!



"TO FEED HIS INSANE DESIRE TO RULE THE WORLD, HE COULD INTIMIDATE WHOLE POPULATIONS INTO SUBMISSION, WITH BIZARRE THOUGHT CREATURES..."



"OR, PERHAPS, HIS MIND WOULD CONJURE UP AN INCREDIBLE ARMY OF ROBOTS TO ENSLAVE US..."



GOOD GRIEF, PROF-- WE CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN! THERE MUST BE SOME WAY TO BRING ROC AND HIS POWERS TO BAY!

HOW? ANY ATTACK WE COULD MOUNT WOULD BE CRUSHED IN AN INSTANT BY ROC'S THOUGHT POWERS! NO... WE MUST SOMEHOW FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE! OF COURSE!



WE HAVE GOT THE MEANS TO COMBAT ROC... THE **THOUGHT MACHINE!** ONE OF US CAN SUBMIT HIMSELF TO A TREATMENT, AND FIGHT THAT VILLAIN WITH EQUAL POWERS!

YOU HIT IT, PROF! THAT WAY, AT LEAST, WE'LL BE ABLE TO HOLD ROC TO A STALEMATE UNTIL DR. HASCOMB CAN FIND A NEUTRALIZER!



I'M WORKING ON ONE NOW--BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG IT'LL TAKE! AND THE CHALLENGER WHO IS EXPOSED TO THE MACHINE MAY NEVER RETURN TO NORMALCY!

WE'VE GOT TO TAKE THAT RISK--AND I GUESS THERE'S ONLY ONE FAIR WAY TO DECIDE WHICH ONE OF US IT'LL BE... WE'LL DRAW LOTS!

STRAWS ARE SELECTED--AND, AFTER THE FOUR CHALLENGERS DRAW...

LOOKS LIKE I'M HOLDING THE SHORT ONE! WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?

I'LL PREPARE THE MACHINE FOR OPERATION! IT WON'T TAKE LONG, ACE...



WITHIN THE HOUR, A BIZARRE SCENE TAKES PLACE IN THE ISLAND CLEARING...

GOSH... I WONDER IF IT'S HURTING HIM?

THE DOCTOR ASSURED ME THERE IS NO PAIN, RED!



SOON, A WOOLY ACE STEPS FROM THE CHAIR...

I DON'T FEEL ANY DIFFERENT... PERHAPS THE TREATMENT WAS A WASHOUT, DOC!

THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO DETERMINE THAT, ACE! CONCENTRATE ON SOMETHING-- ANYTHING! CREATE A PICTURE IN YOUR MIND!



THE FEARLESS LEADER OF THE FAMED TEAM LAPSES INTO DEEP CONCENTRATION-- AND THEN...



A REAL SPACE SHIP-- JUST LIKE THE ONE ACE HAS DREAMED OF DESIGNING!

IN APPEARANCE ONLY, ROCKY! THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF THESE THOUGHT SPECIMENS IS OF UNKNOWN MATTER!

NEXT INSTANT...

HEY--IT'S FADING AWAY... JUST LIKE THAT BRUTE WE TANGLED WITH!

THE SPECIMENS REMAIN ONLY AS LONG AS THEY FULFILL THE PURPOSE THEY WERE CONCEIVED FOR-- OR FAIL TO DO SO!



NO WONDER THE GIANT GORILLA FADED AWAY! ONCE WE DEFEATED HIM, HE HAD NO FURTHER REASON TO EXIST!

NOW, IT'S TIME TO RUN DOWN ROC! MY HUNCH IS HE'LL HEAD FOR HIS MOUNTAIN HIDEOUT, TO MAKE PLANS! KEEP SEARCHING FOR A NEUTRALIZER, DOC-- WE'LL KEEP IN TOUCH VIA RADIO!



WINGING BACK TO THE MAINLAND, THE CHALLENGERS JET OVER THE CRIMINAL'S MOUNTAIN RETREAT, WHERE THEY ARE GREETED BY...

A-A PAIR OF MONSTROUS HANDS--REACHING UP TO CRUSH THE PLANE!

ANOTHER ONE OF ROC'S THOUGHT WEAPONS! HE'S NOT ALLOWING ANYBODY TO GET NEAR HIS HIDEOUT! ACE--YOU'VE GOT TO COUNTERACT IT WITH A THOUGHT OF YOUR OWN! HURRY!

HANDS--HOW CAN I DEFEAT A PAIR OF HANDS? OF COURSE...

A THOUGHT CRACKLES THROUGH THE PILOT'S MIND--A PICTURE TAKES FORM--AND...

SNAP!

THAT WAS QUICK THINKING, ACE! NOW, SET HER DOWN IN THAT LAKE...

EH? WHAT'S HAPPENED? I DIDN'T THINK THOSE HUGE HANDCUFFS INTO EXISTENCE!

THOSE FOOL CHALLENGERS--ALIVE! THEY SOMEHOW DEFEATED MY THOUGHT APE...

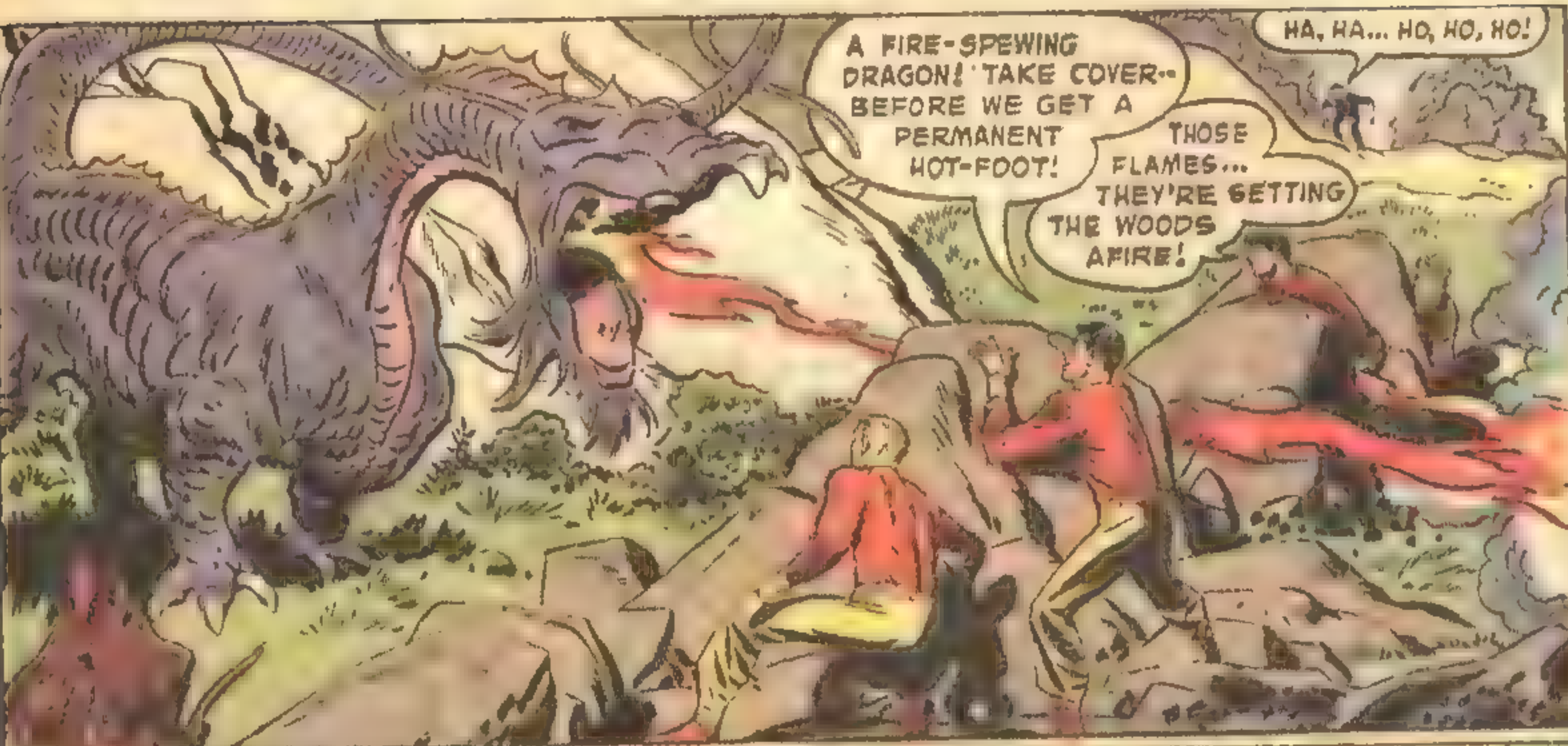
NOW HEAR THIS--BEFORE YOU CONJURE UP ANOTHER THOUGHT WEAPON, ROC! WE THWARTED YOUR ATTEMPT TO DESTROY HASCOMB'S MACHINE, AND ONE OF US NOW POSSESSES YOUR POWER!

SO!... THAT EXPLAINS THE APPEARANCE OF THOSE HANDCUFFS! VERY WELL, WE SHALL HAVE A DUEL OF MINDS, CHALLENGERS...

COME TO YOUR SENSES, ROC! THE CREATION OF THESE THOUGHT CREATURES CAN ONLY BRING DESTRUCTION! SURRENDER--NOW!

HE WON'T LISTEN TO REASON! LOOK... HE--HE'S THINKING!

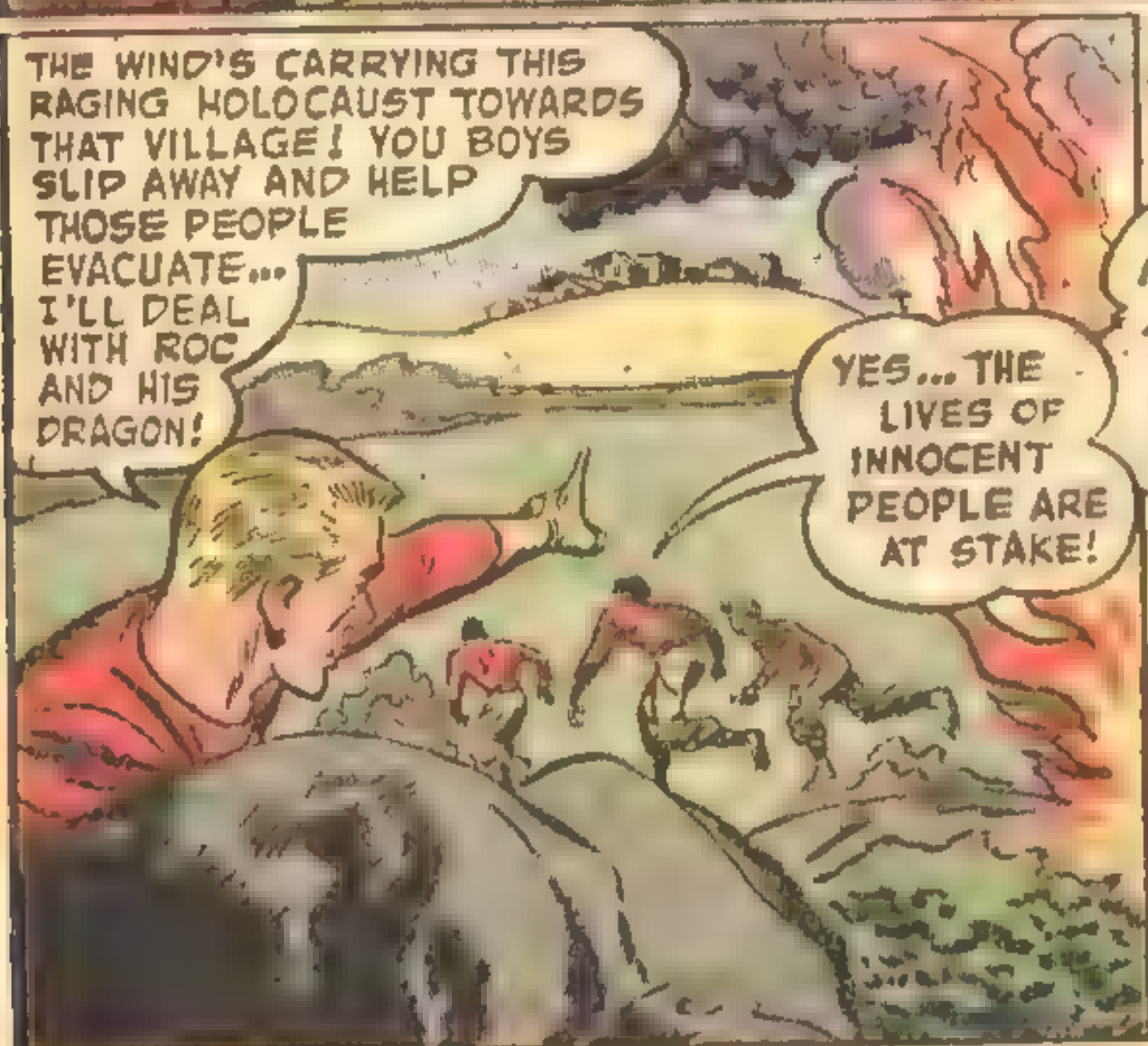
YES--SPAWNING ANOTHER THOUGHT CREATURE...



A FIRE-SPEWING
DRAGON! TAKE COVER--
BEFORE WE GET A
PERMANENT
HOT-FOOT!

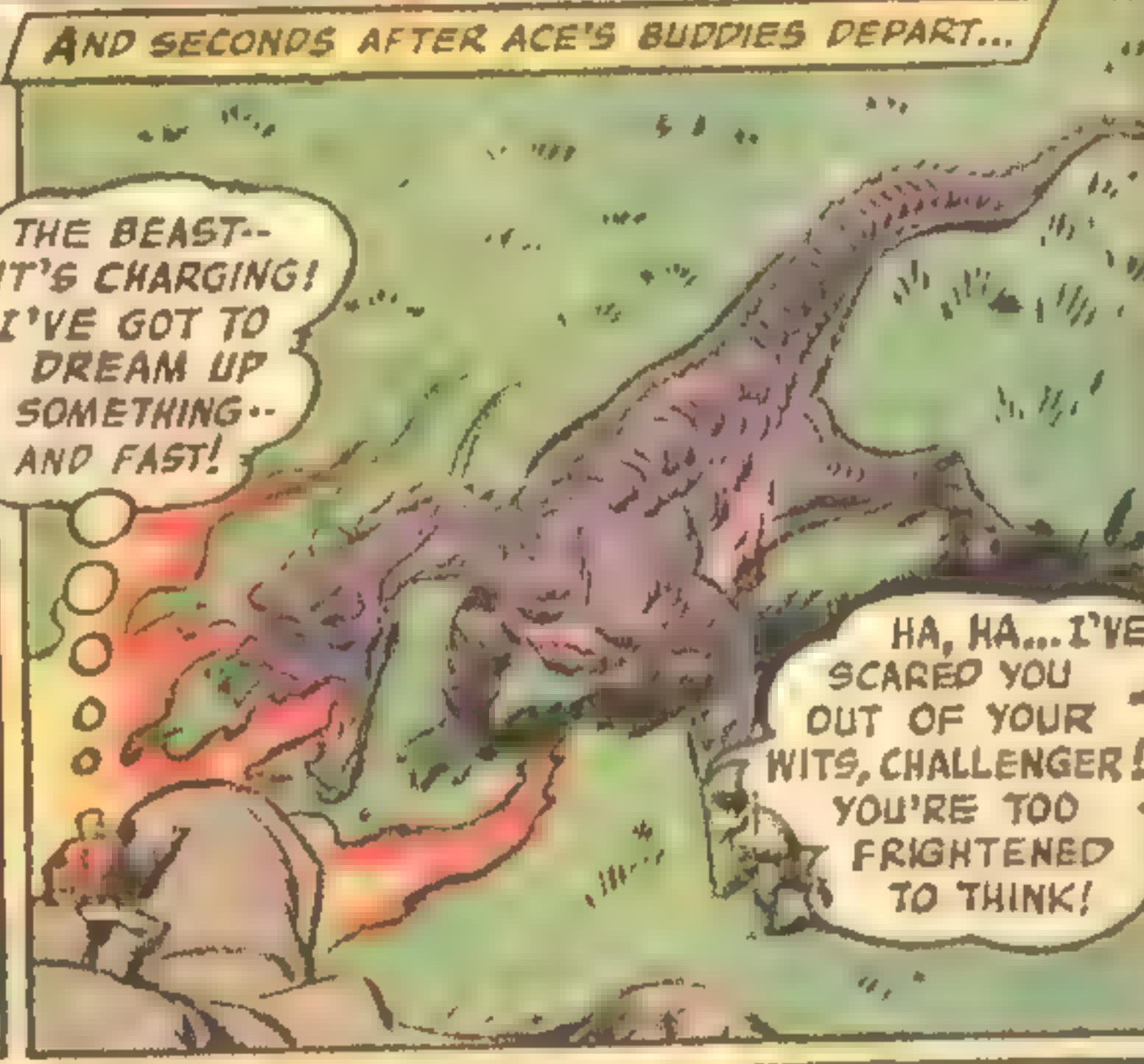
HA, HA... HO, HO, HO!

THOSE
FLAMES...
THEY'RE GETTING
THE WOODS
AFIRE!



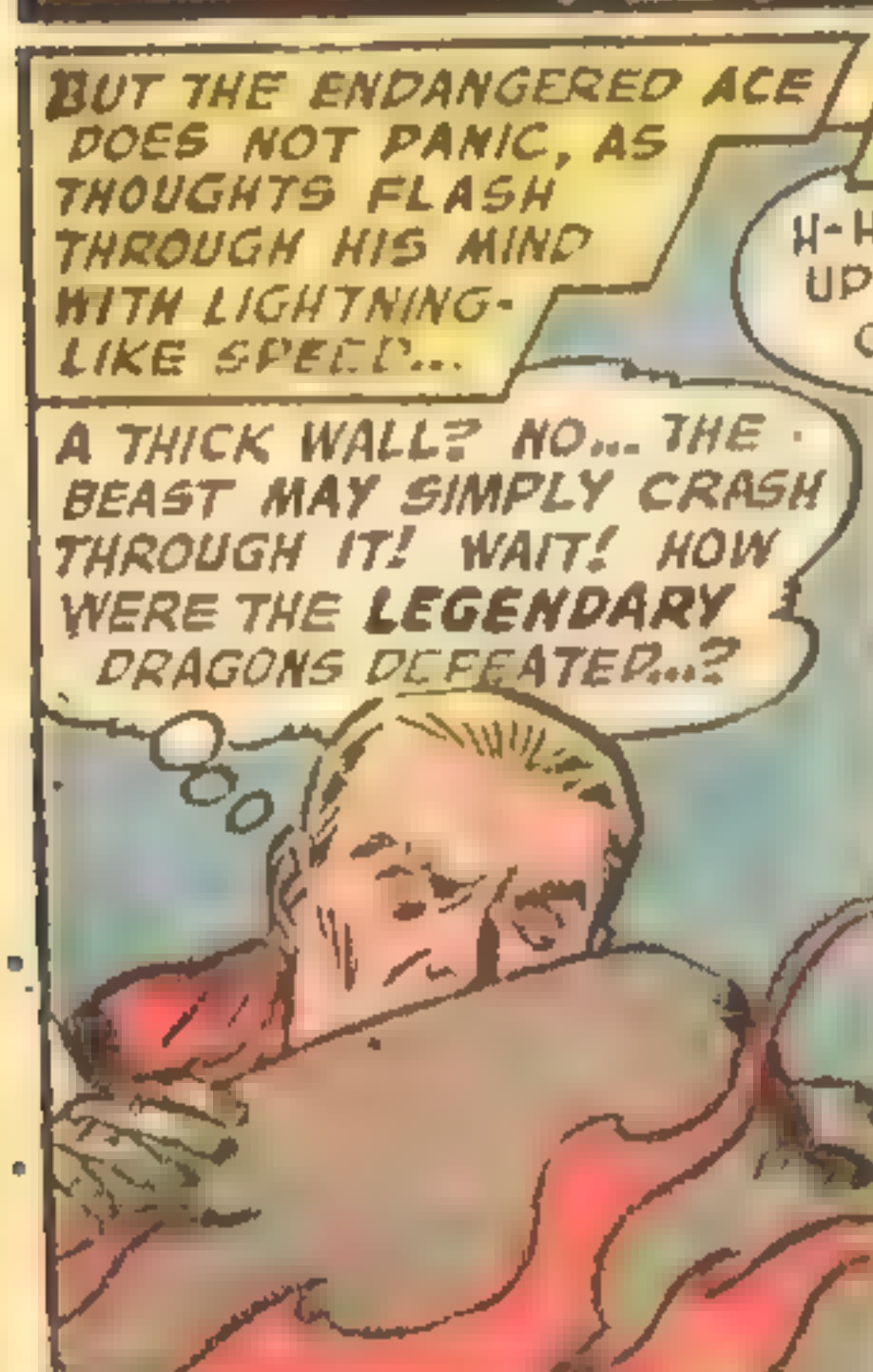
THE WIND'S CARRYING THIS
RAGING HOLOCAUST TOWARDS
THAT VILLAGE! YOU BOYS
SLIP AWAY AND HELP
THOSE PEOPLE
EVACUATE...
I'LL DEAL
WITH ROC
AND HIS
DRAGON!

YES... THE
LIVES OF
INNOCENT
PEOPLE ARE
AT STAKE!



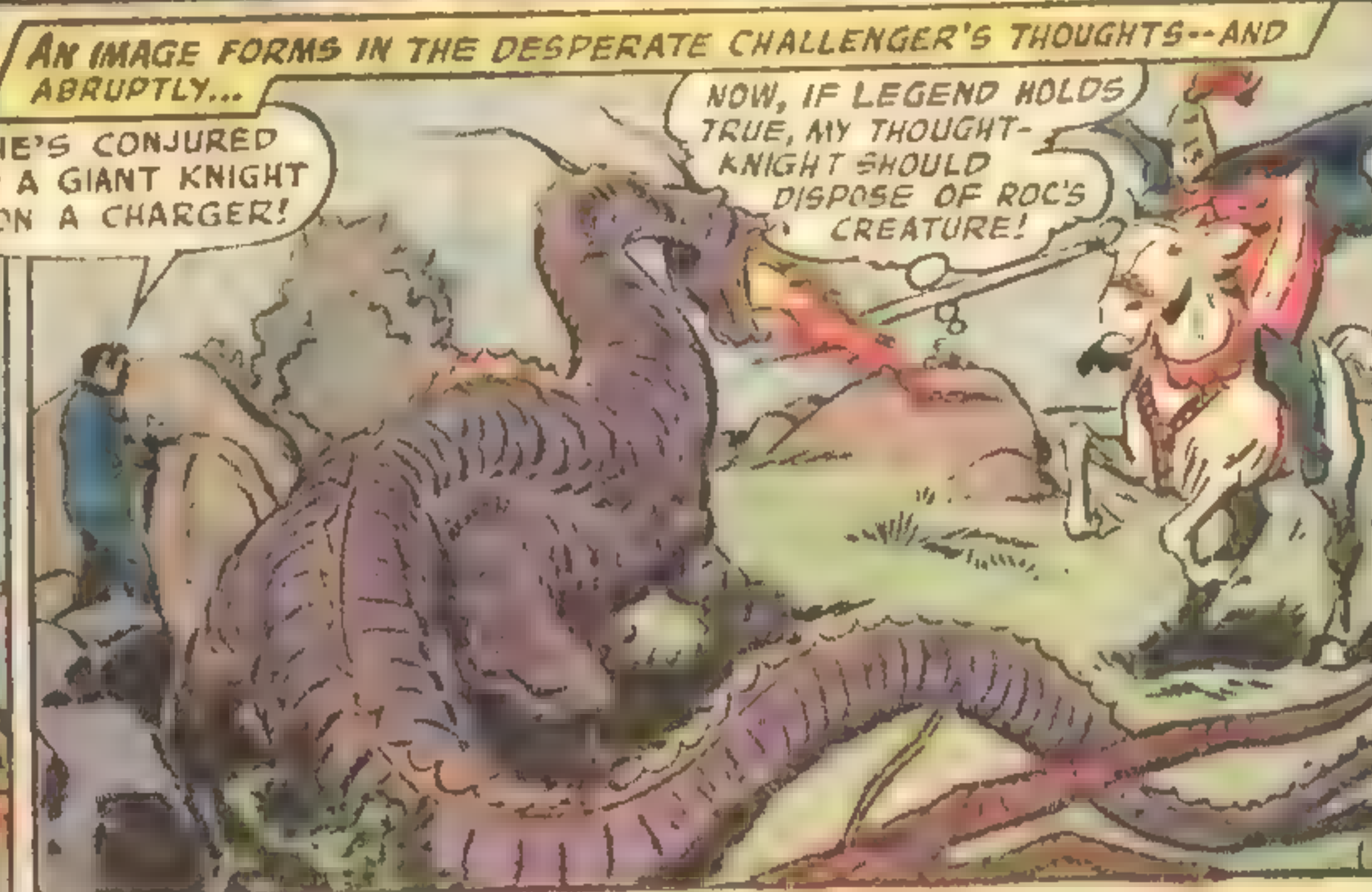
THE BEAST--
IT'S CHARGING!
I'VE GOT TO
DREAM UP
SOMETHING--
AND FAST!

HA, HA... I'VE
SCARED YOU
OUT OF YOUR
WITS, CHALLENGER!
YOU'RE TOO
FRIGHTENED
TO THINK!



BUT THE ENDANGERED ACE
DOES NOT PANIC, AS
THOUGHTS FLASH
THROUGH HIS MIND
WITH LIGHTNING-
LIKE SPEED...

A THICK WALL? NO... THE
BEAST MAY SIMPLY CRASH
THROUGH IT! WAIT! HOW
WERE THE **LEGENDARY**
DRAGONS DEFEATED...?



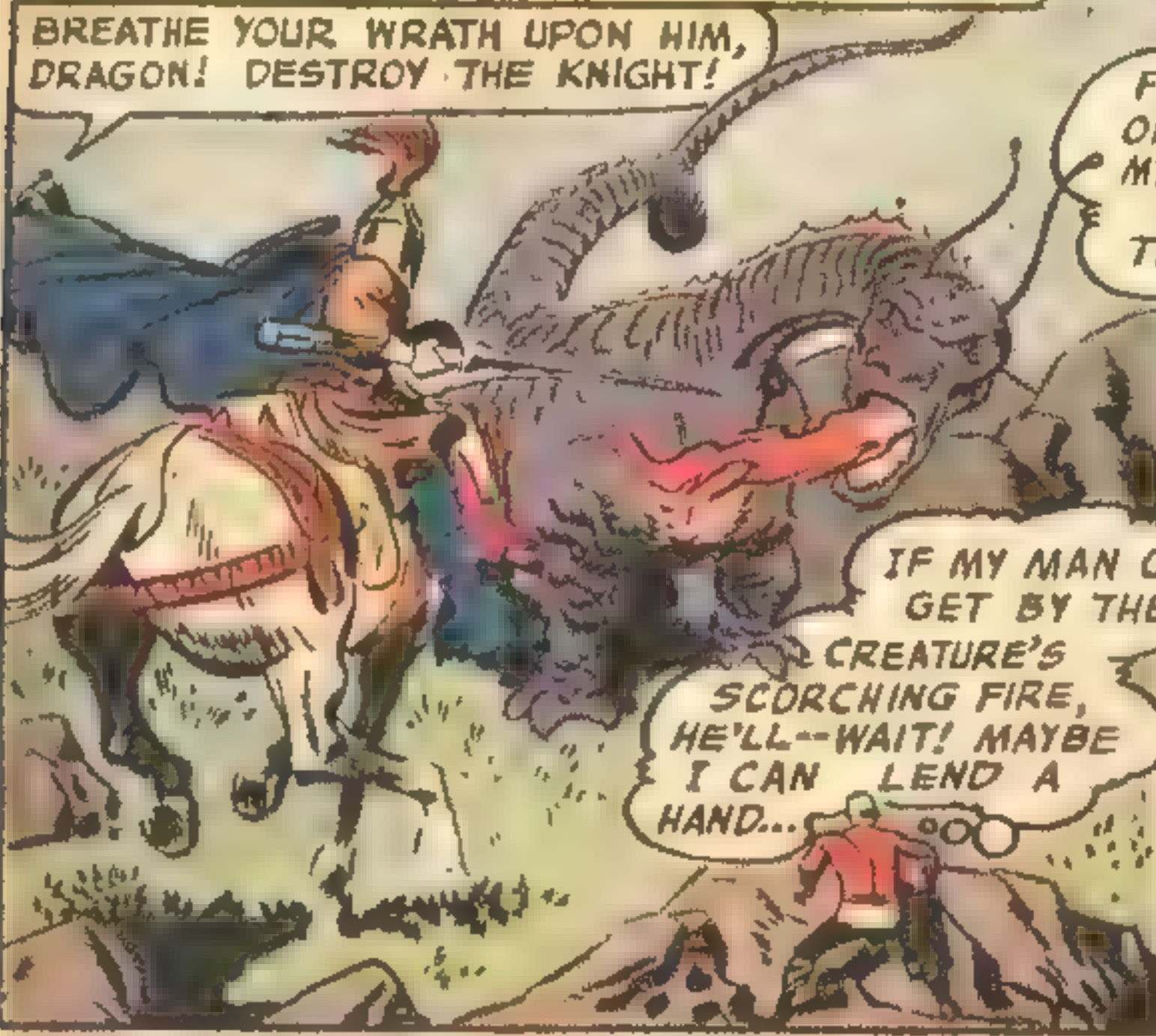
AN IMAGE FORMS IN THE DESPERATE CHALLENGER'S THOUGHTS--AND
ABRUPTLY...

H-HE'S CONJURED
UP A GIANT KNIGHT
ON A CHARGER!

NOW, IF LEGEND HOLDS
TRUE, MY THOUGHT-
KNIGHT SHOULD
DISPOSE OF ROC'S
CREATURE!

AS THE BIZARRE FOES CHARGE ONE ANOTHER...

BREATHE YOUR WRATH UPON HIM,
DRAGON! DESTROY THE KNIGHT!

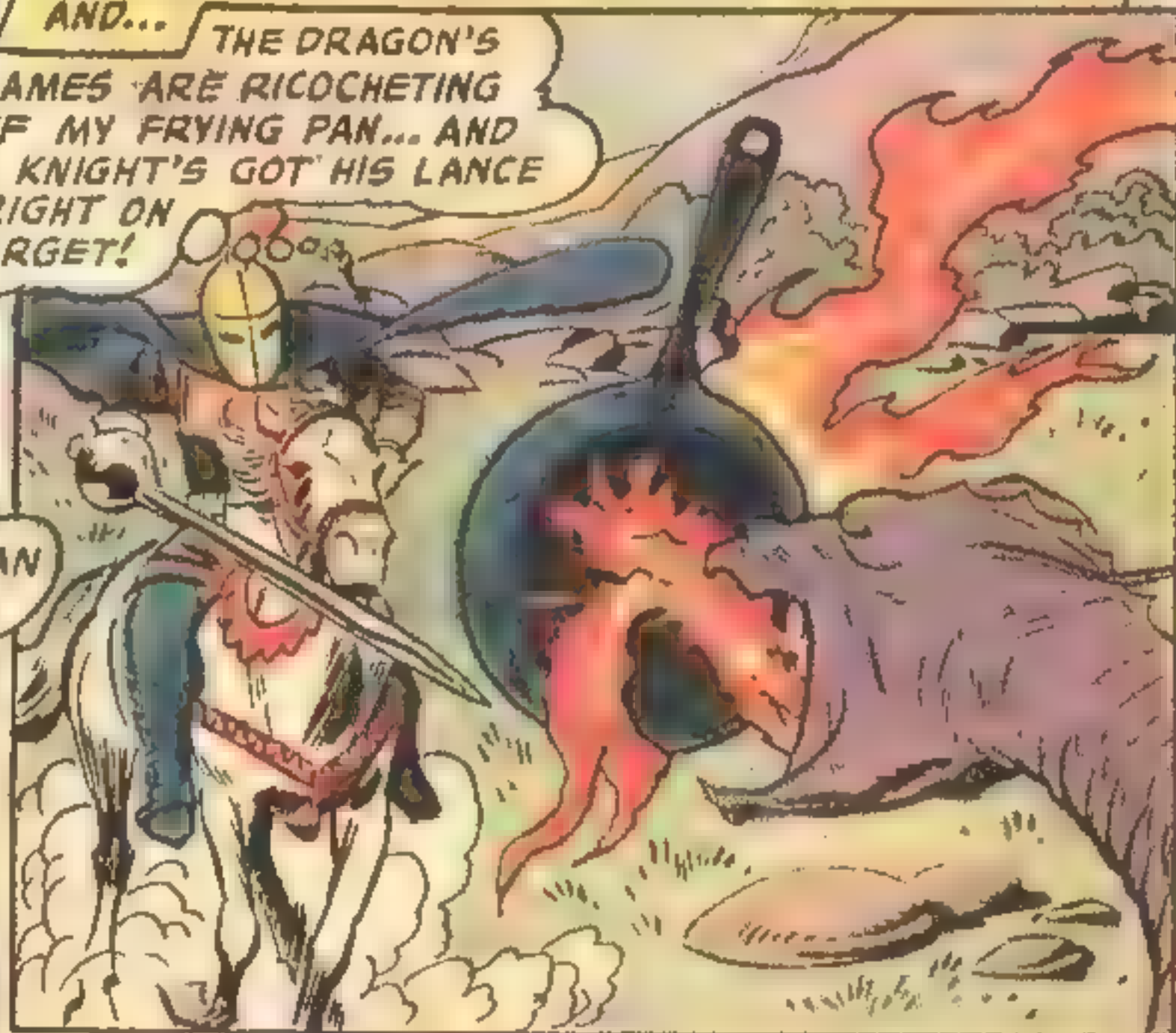


IF MY MAN CAN
GET BY THE

CREATURE'S
SCORCHING FIRE,
HE'LL--WAIT! MAYBE
I CAN LEND A
HAND...

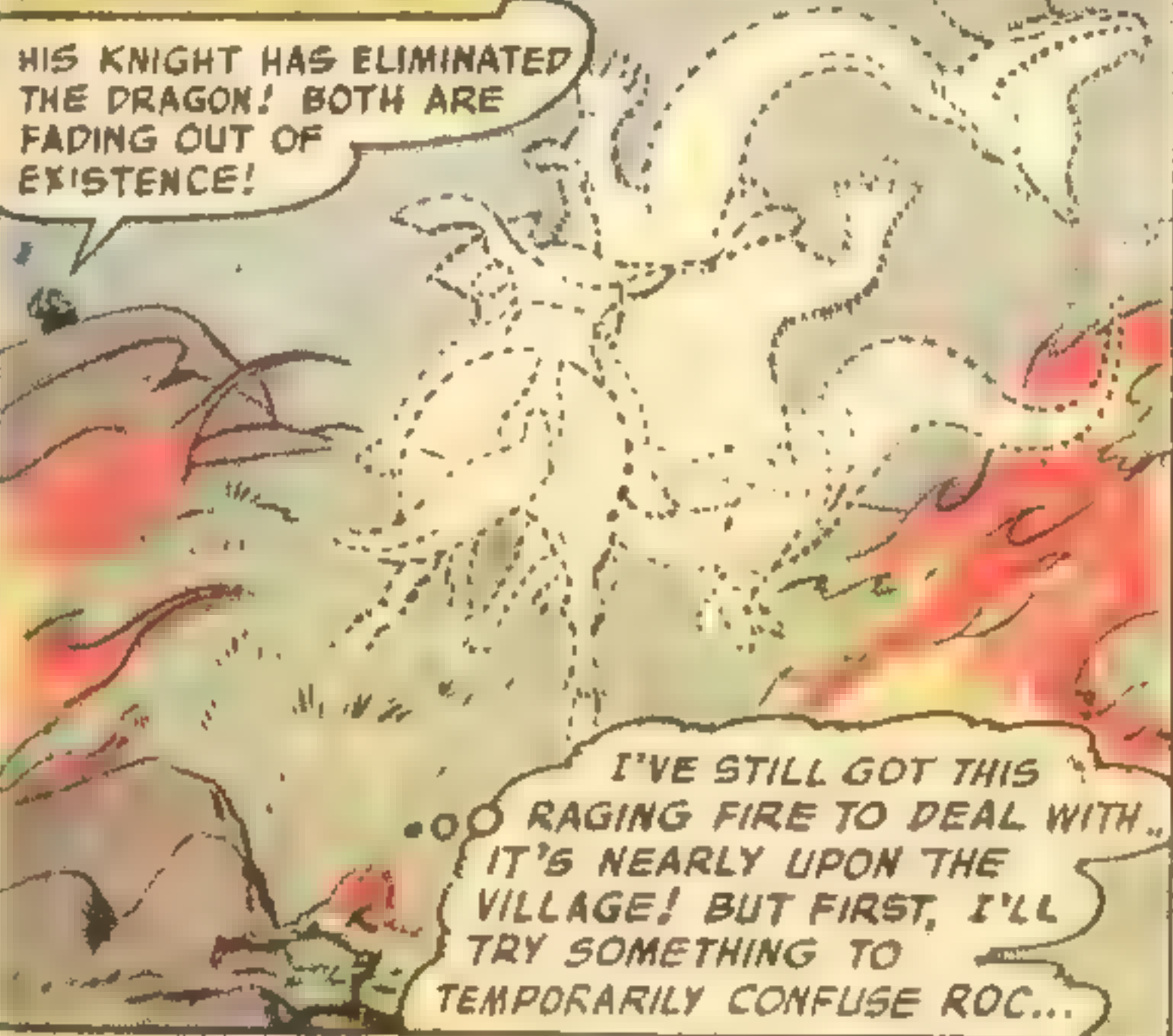
ACE QUICKLY CONCEIVES ANOTHER MIND PICTURE,
AND...

THE DRAGON'S
FLAMES ARE RICOCHETING
OFF MY FRYING PAN... AND
MY KNIGHT'S GOT HIS LANCE
RIGHT ON
TARGET!



A MOMENT LATER...

HIS KNIGHT HAS ELIMINATED
THE DRAGON! BOTH ARE
FADING OUT OF
EXISTENCE!

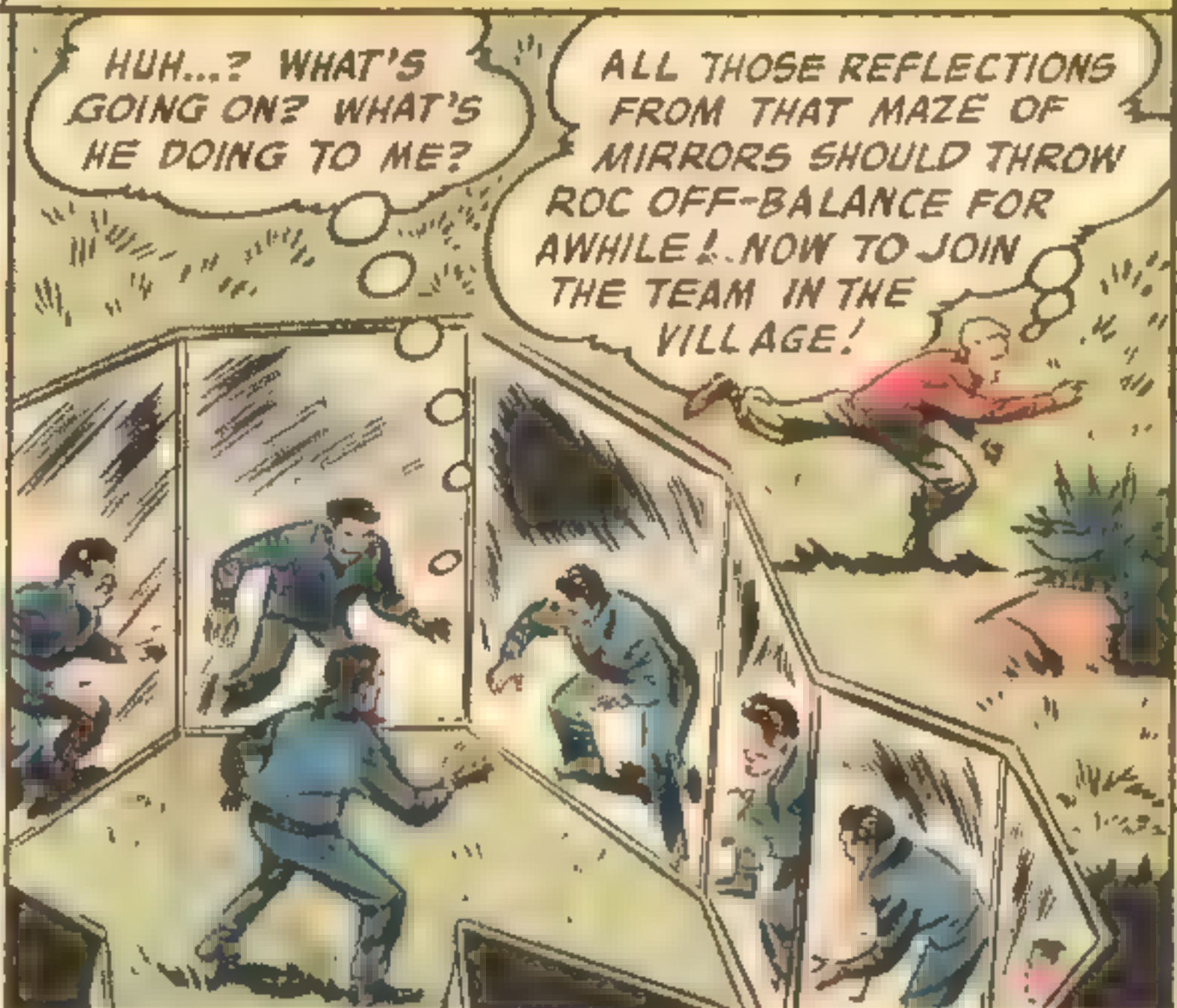


I'VE STILL GOT THIS
RAGING FIRE TO DEAL WITH...
IT'S NEARLY UPON THE
VILLAGE! BUT FIRST, I'LL
TRY SOMETHING TO
TEMPORARILY CONFUSE ROC...

ACE SKETCHES STILL ANOTHER MENTAL IMAGE, AND...

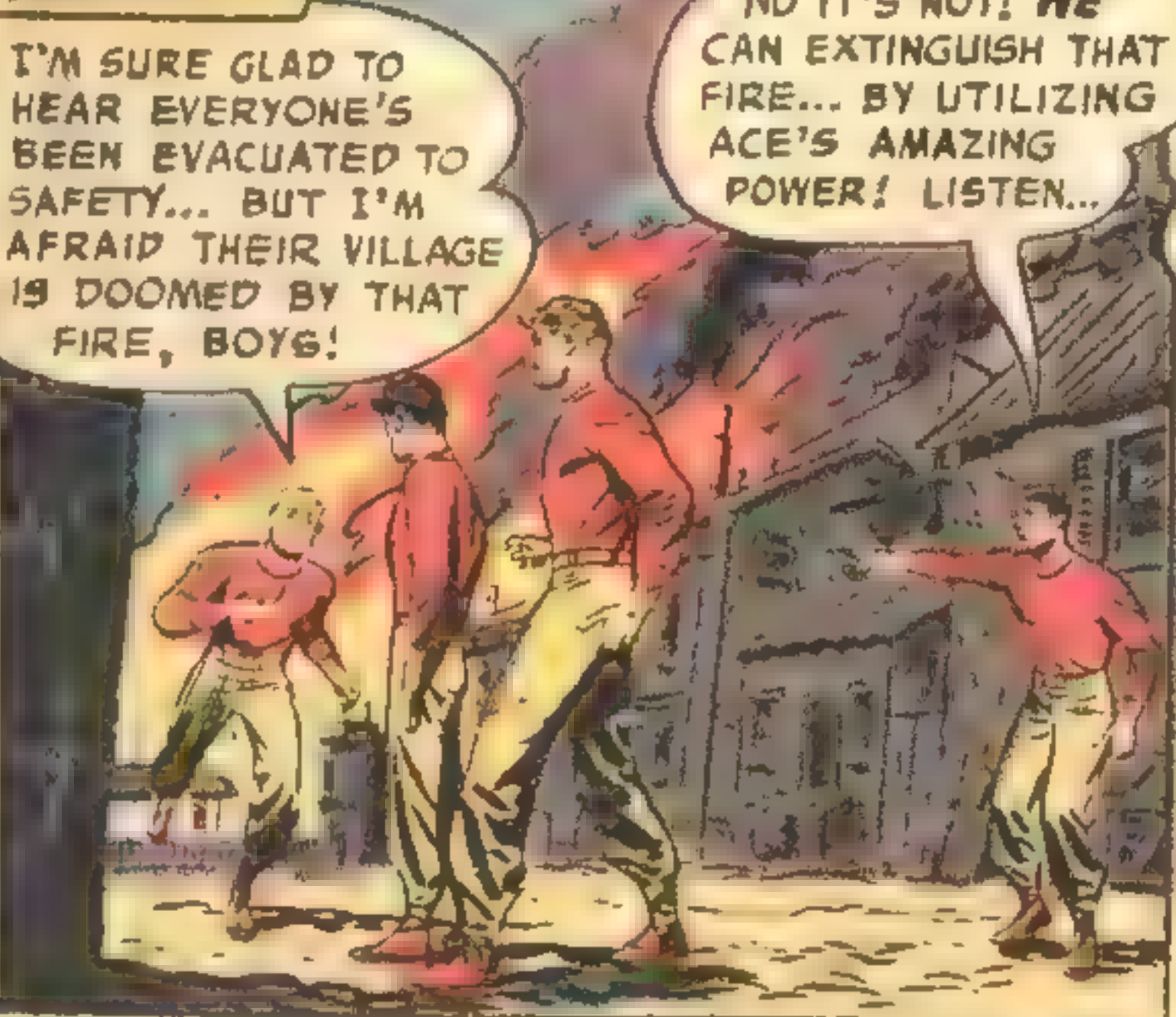
HUH...? WHAT'S
GOING ON? WHAT'S
HE DOING TO ME?

ALL THOSE REFLECTIONS
FROM THAT MAZE OF
MIRRORS SHOULD THROW
ROC OFF-BALANCE FOR
AWHILE! NOW TO JOIN
THE TEAM IN THE
VILLAGE!



PRESENTLY...

I'M SURE GLAD TO
HEAR EVERYONE'S
BEEN EVACUATED TO
SAFETY... BUT I'M
AFRAID THEIR VILLAGE
IS DOOMED BY THAT
FIRE, BOYS!

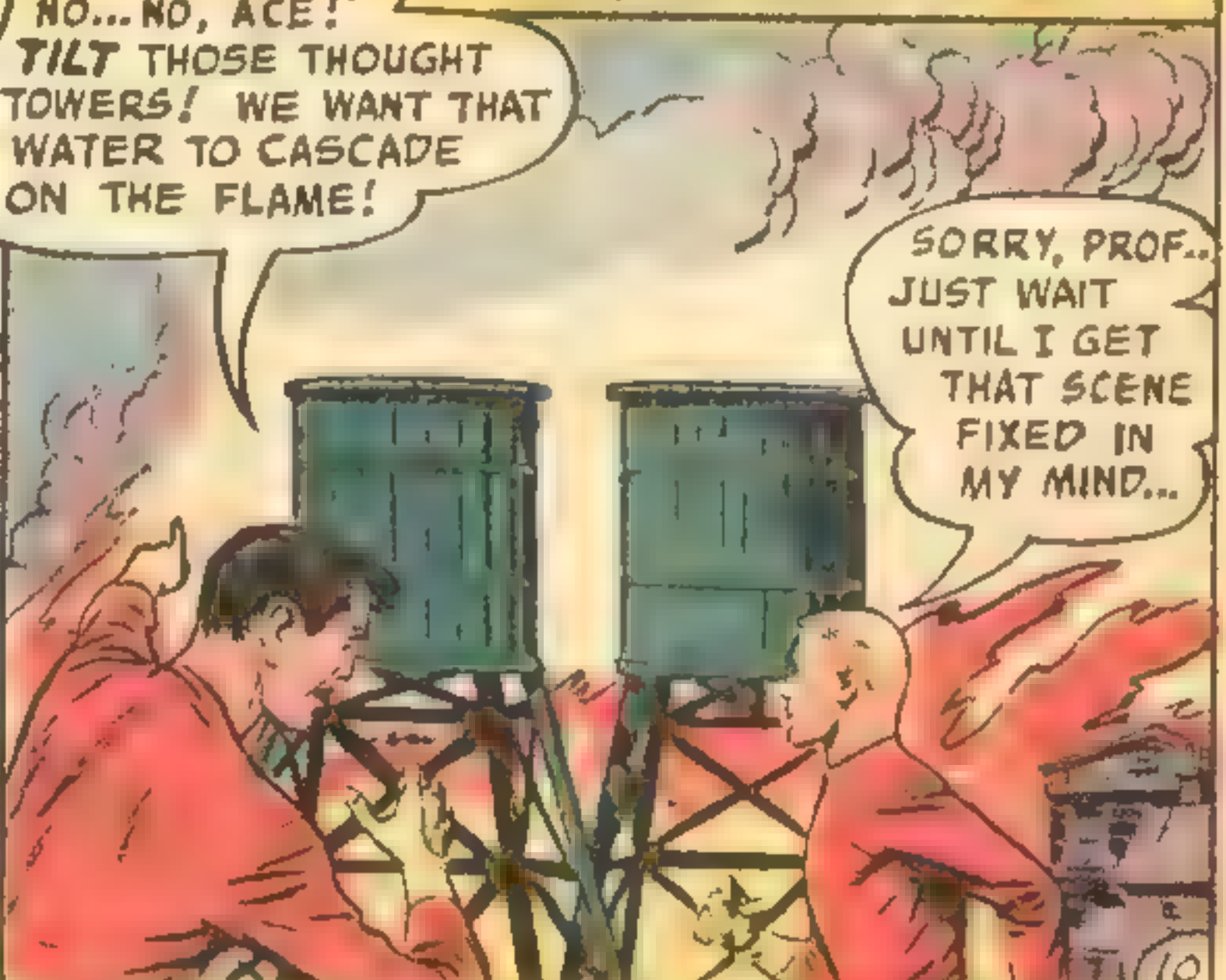


NO IT'S NOT! WE
CAN EXTINGUISH THAT
FIRE... BY UTILIZING
ACE'S AMAZING
POWER! LISTEN...

PROF HALEY PAINTS A VERBAL PICTURE TO ACE--
AND, AN INSTANT LATER...

NO...NO, ACE!
TILT THOSE THOUGHT
TOWERS! WE WANT THAT
WATER TO CASCADE
ON THE FLAME!

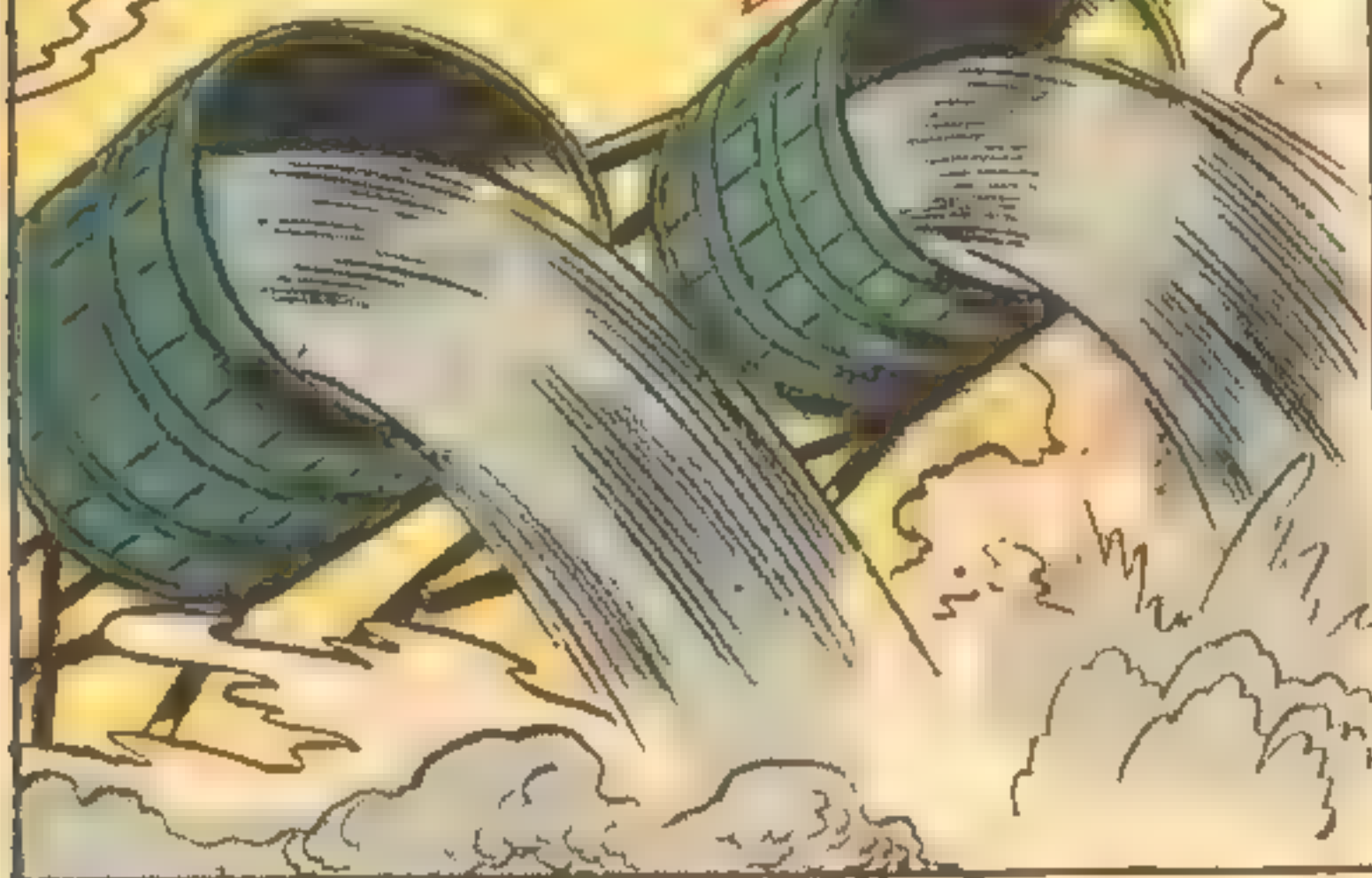
SORRY, PROF..
JUST WAIT
UNTIL I GET
THAT SCENE
FIXED IN
MY MIND...



AND AFTER THE TEAM'S FEARLESS PILOT ALTERS HIS MENTAL VISION...

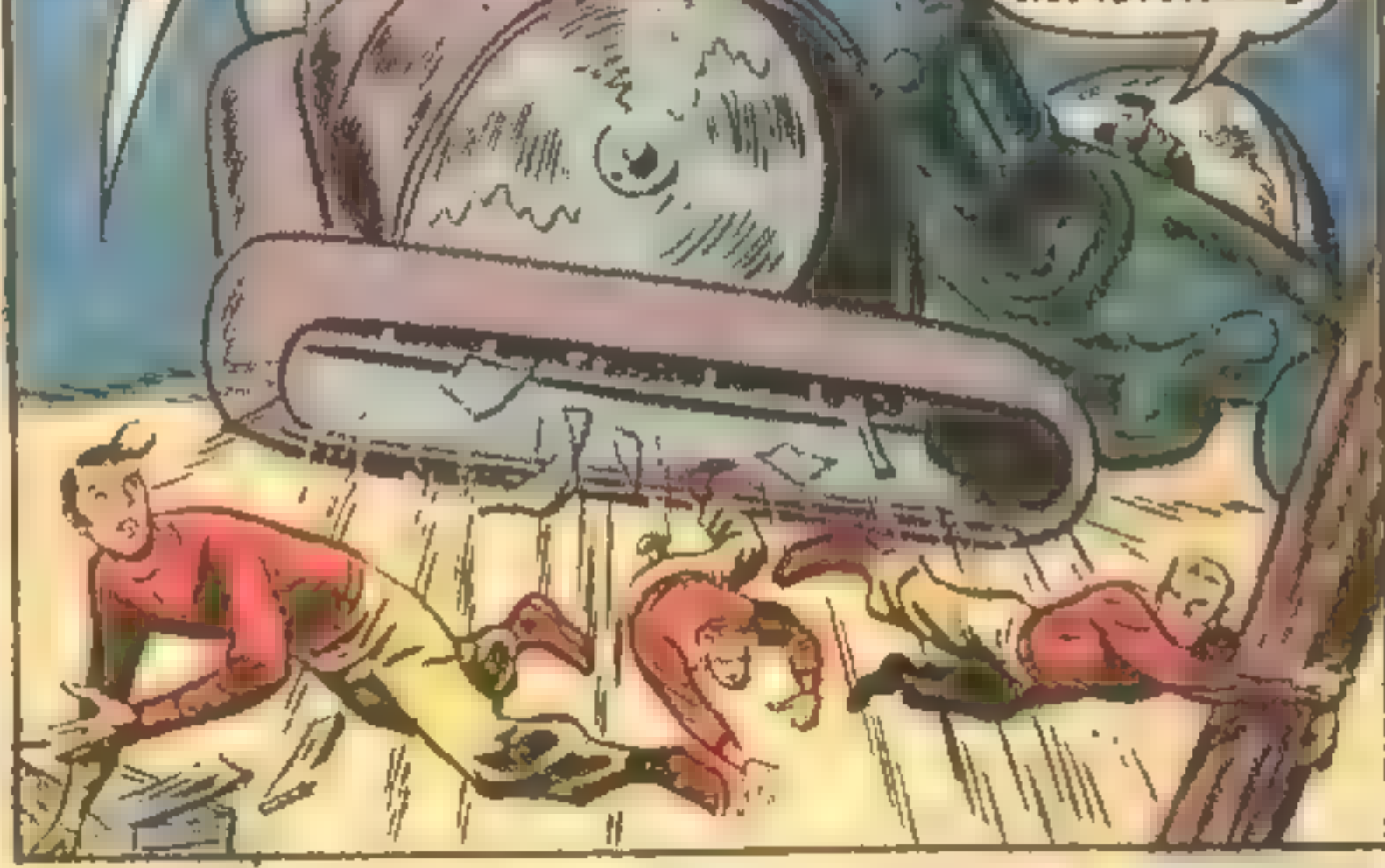
IT'S WORKING! THE WATER FROM THOSE TOWERS IS EXTINGUISHING THE FIRE...

WHRRRR



ROC'S BACK IN ACTION-- WITH ANOTHER ONE OF HIS THOUGHT WEAPONS!

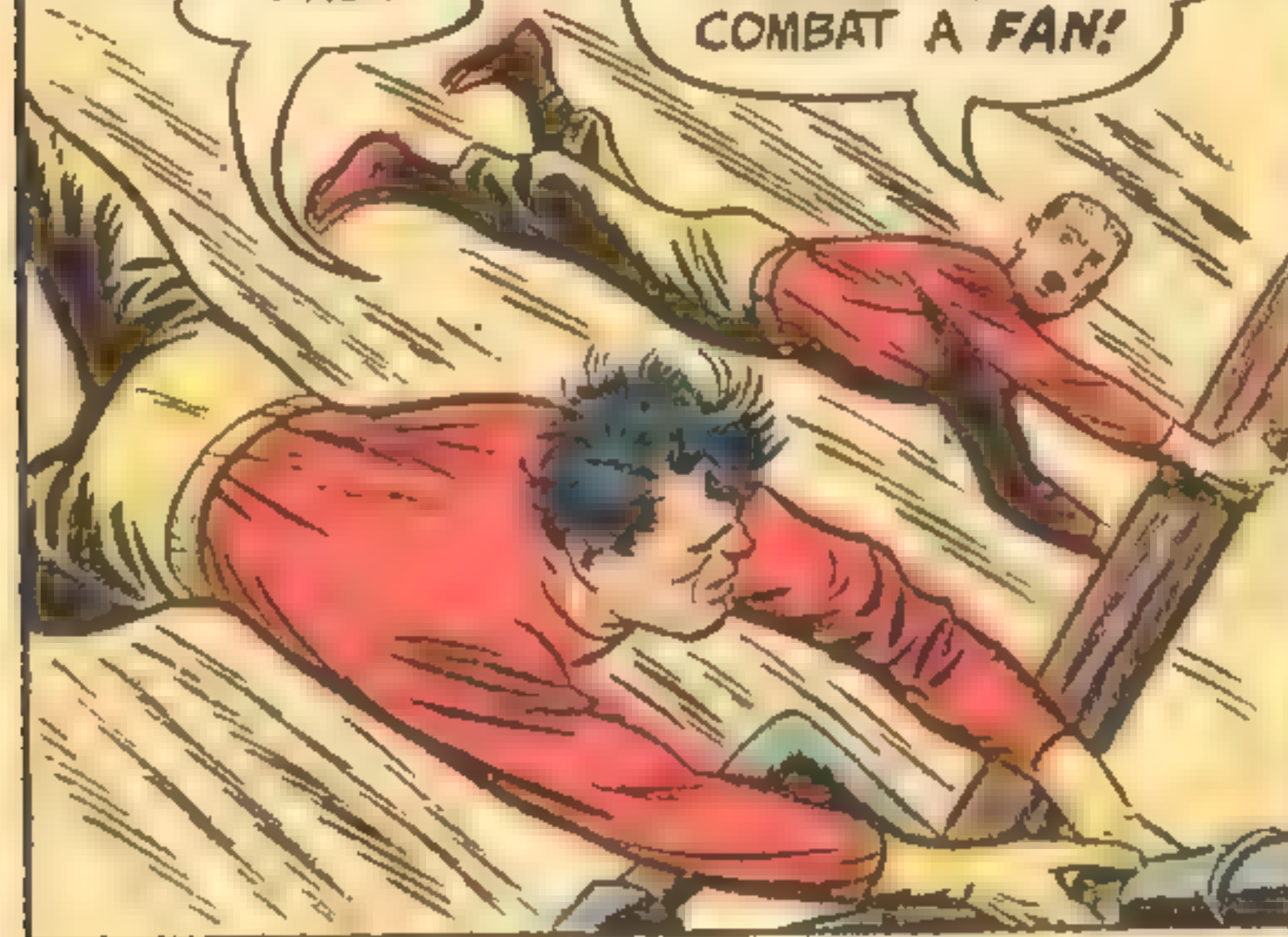
HA, HA--YOU BESTED MY CREATURES, CHALLENGERS... NOW LET'S SEE HOW YOU FARE AGAINST MY VACUUM MACHINE!



AND AS GREAT SUCTION BLADES WHIRL AT HIGH SPEED...

WE CAN'T HANG ON FOREVER, ACE! YOU'VE GOT TO COUNTER-ACT THIS THING AND FAST!

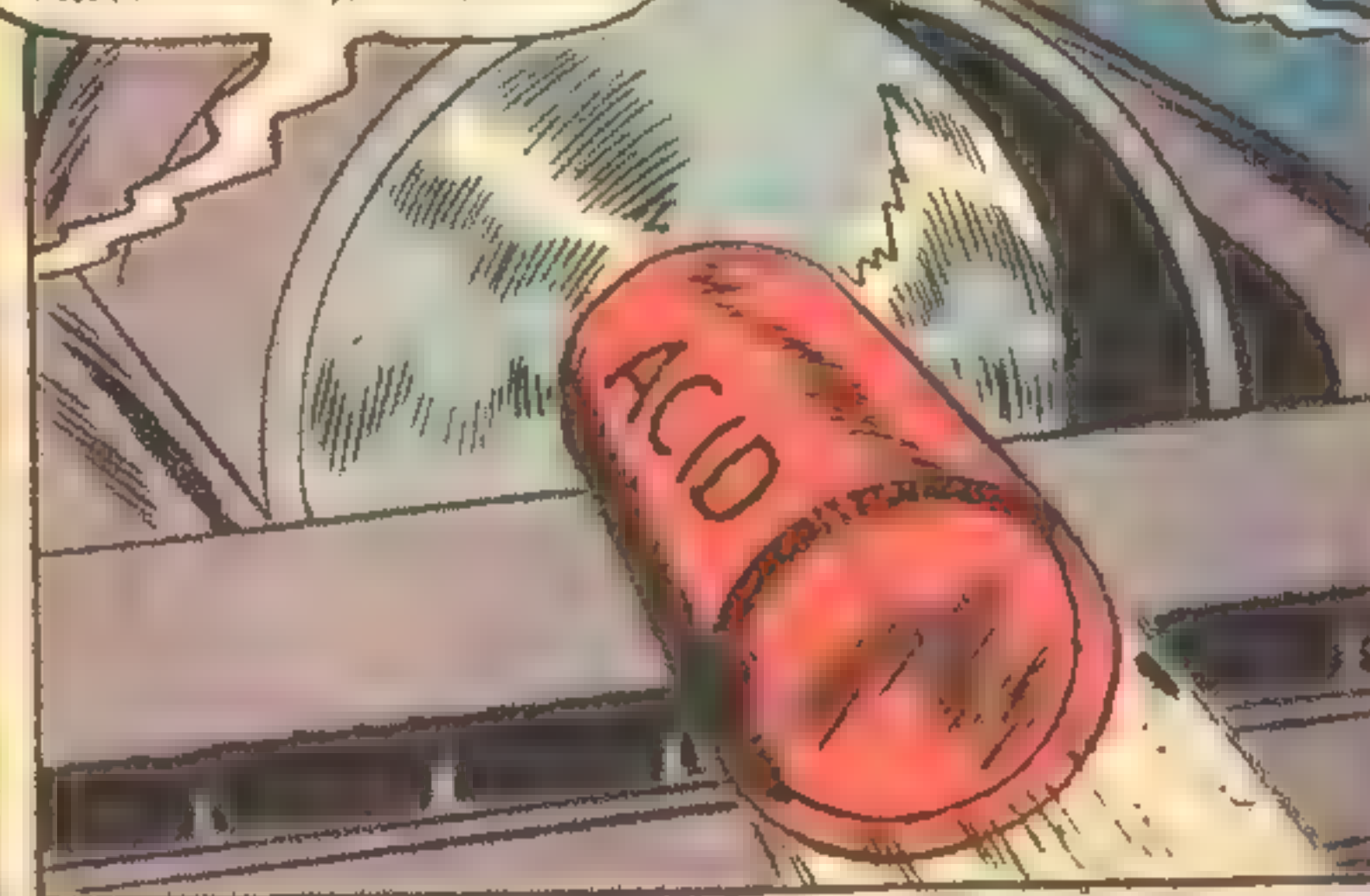
THIS VACUUM DEVICE IS LIKE A--A GIANT FAN... DRAWING US IN! GOT TO THINK OF SOME WAY TO COMBAT A FAN!



A LONE THOUGHT STABS ACE'S MIND--HE CONCENTRATES, AND...

A HUGE VAT OF ACID! GOOD BOY, ACE... THAT SHOULD EAT AWAY THE MACHINE'S MECHANISM!

THAT LIQUID BETTER WORK FAST... I CAN'T HOLD ON MUCH LONGER!

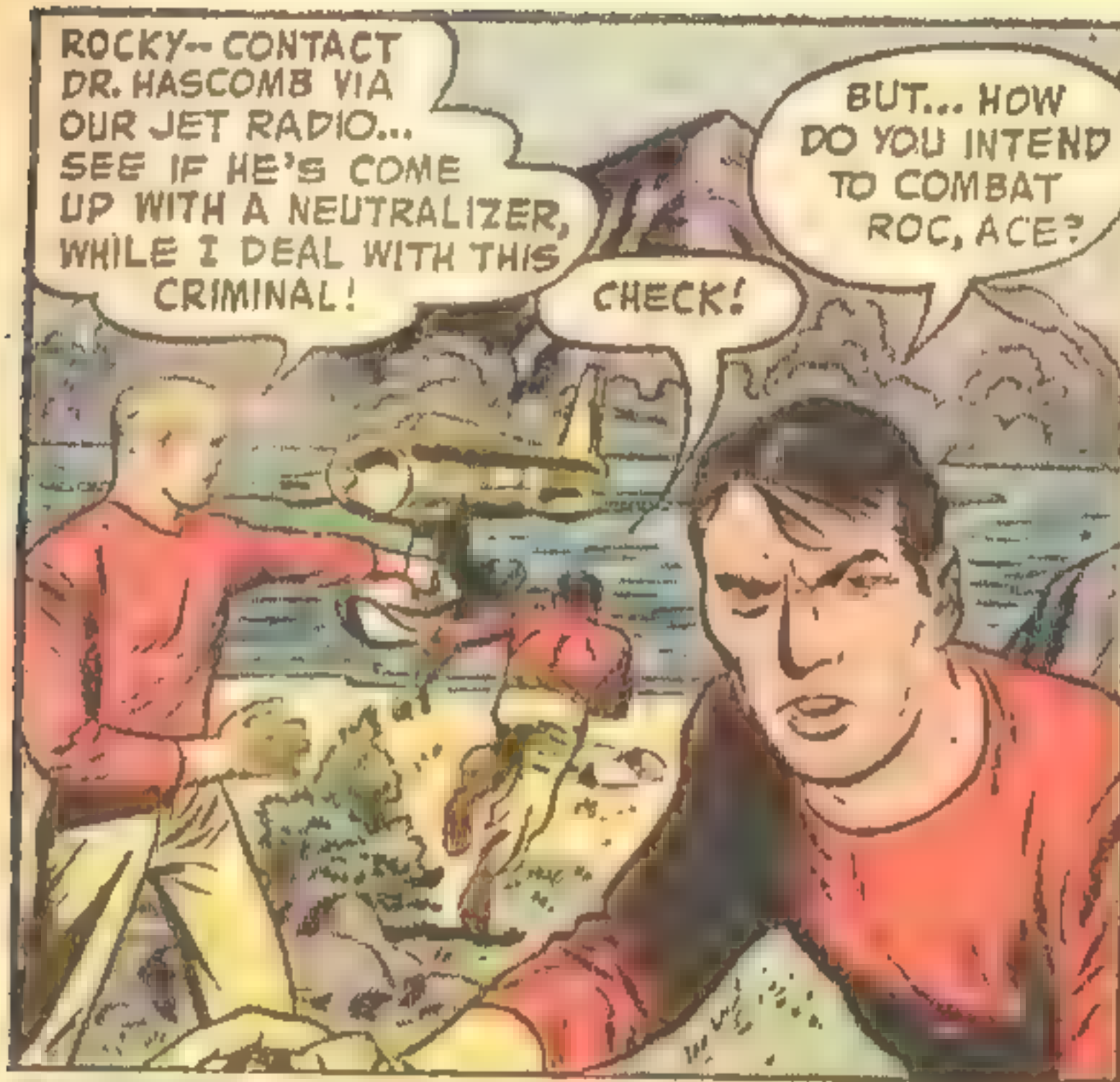


AND AS THE HUNGRY MECHANISM DRAWS IN THE METAL-EATING CHEMICAL...

THE BLADES... THEY'RE DISINTEGRATING!

RIGHT, PROF-- AND NOW IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR US TO TAKE THE OFFENSIVE!

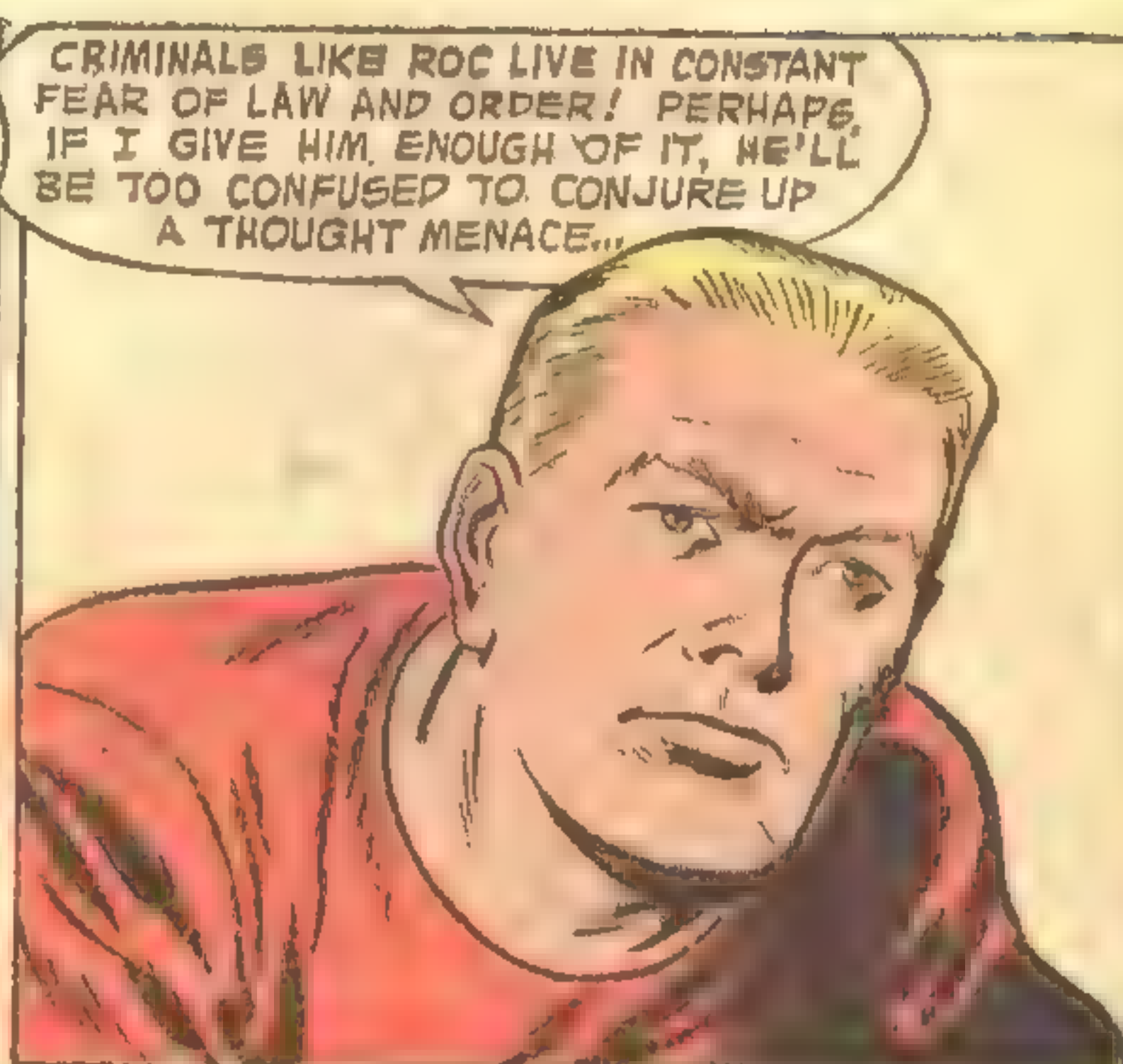




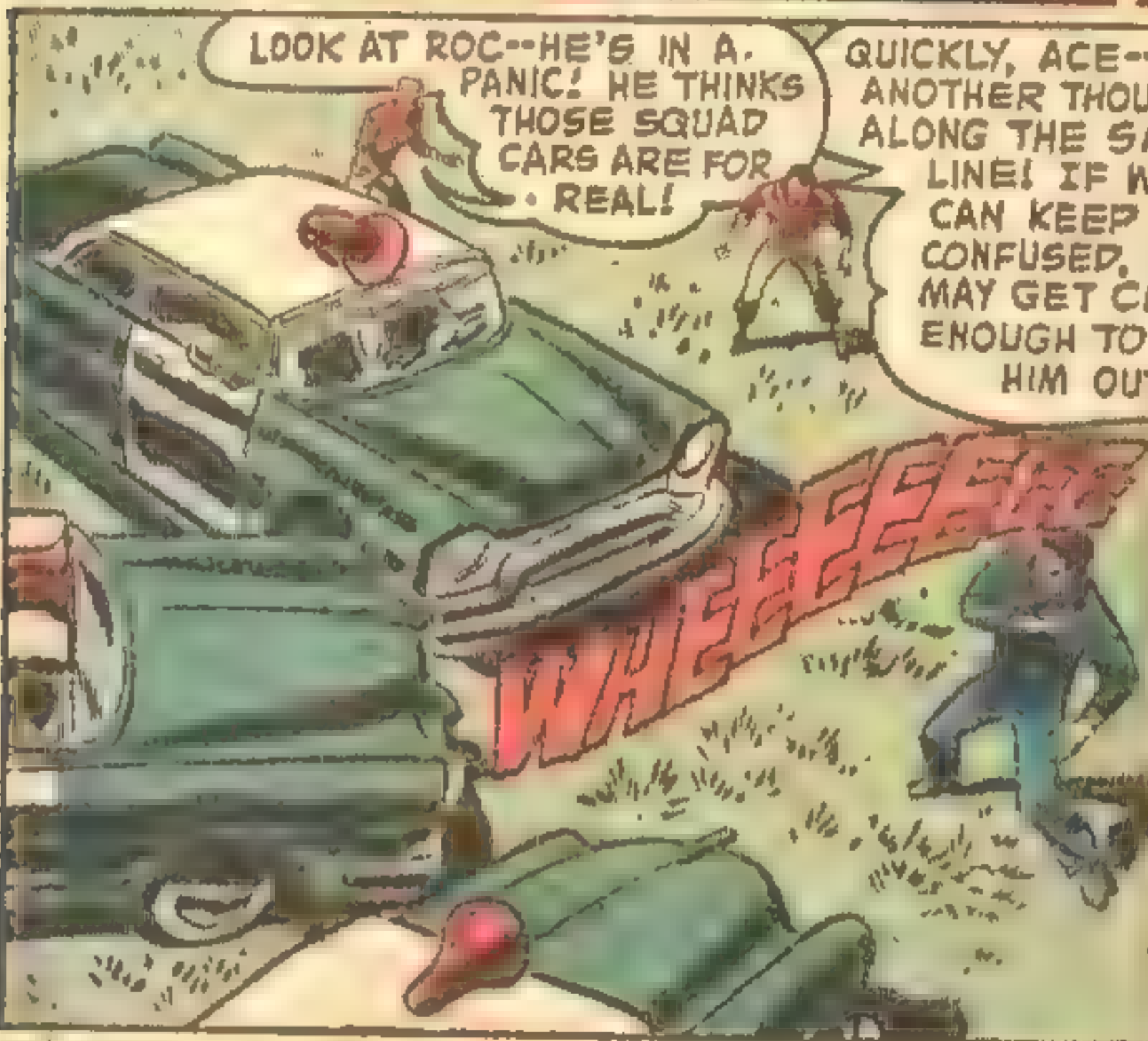
ROCKY-- CONTACT DR. HASCOMB VIA OUR JET RADIO... SEE IF HE'S COME UP WITH A NEUTRALIZER, WHILE I DEAL WITH THIS CRIMINAL!

CHECK!

BUT... HOW DO YOU INTEND TO COMBAT ROC, ACE?



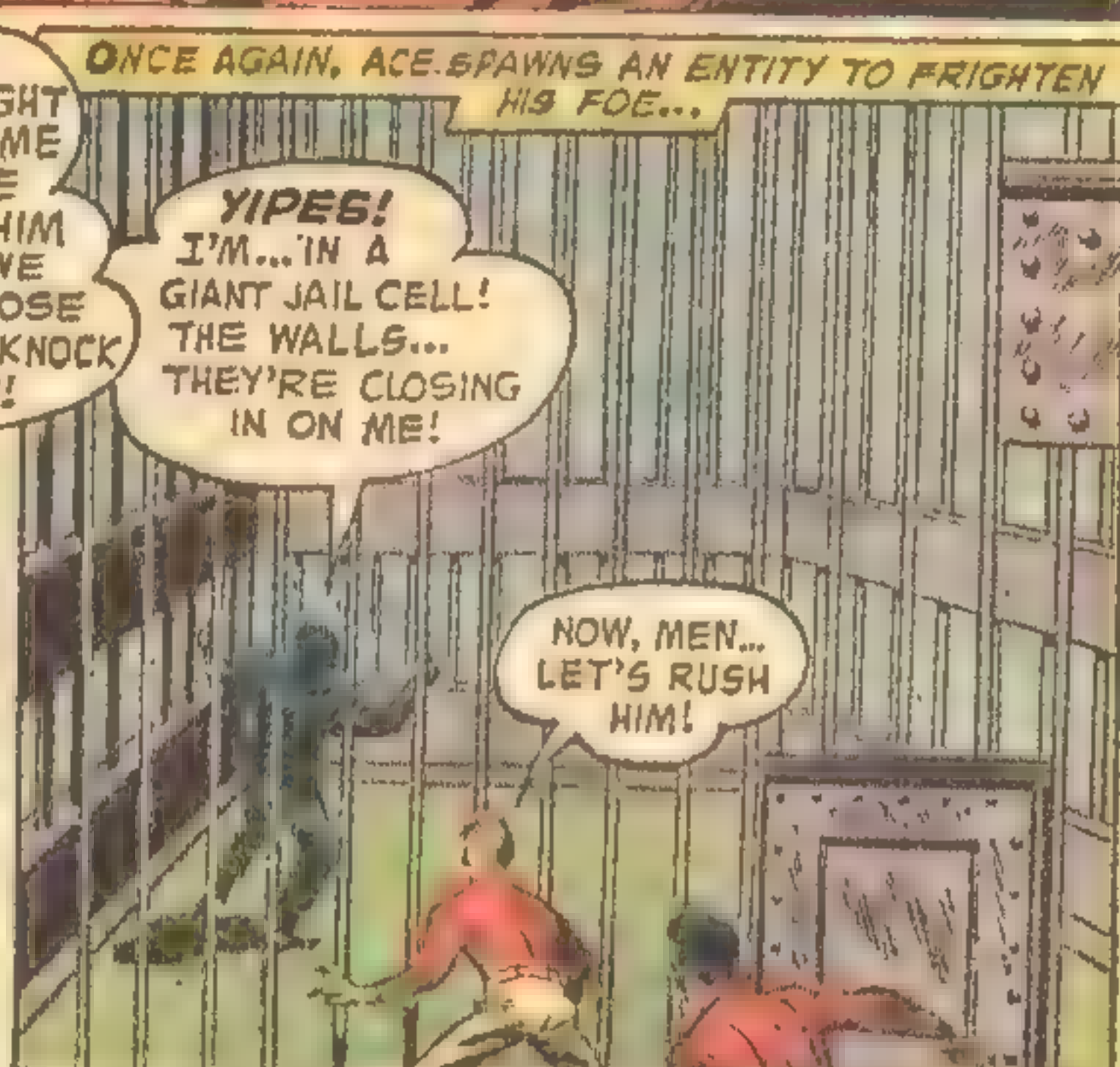
CRIMINALS LIKE ROC LIVE IN CONSTANT FEAR OF LAW AND ORDER! PERHAPS, IF I GIVE HIM ENOUGH OF IT, HE'LL BE TOO CONFUSED TO CONJURE UP A THOUGHT MENACE...



LOOK AT ROC--HE'S IN A PANIC! HE THINKS THOSE SQUAD CARS ARE FOR REAL!

QUICKLY, ACE-- ANOTHER THOUGHT ALONG THE SAME LINE! IF WE CAN KEEP HIM CONFUSED, WE MAY GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO KNOCK HIM OUT!

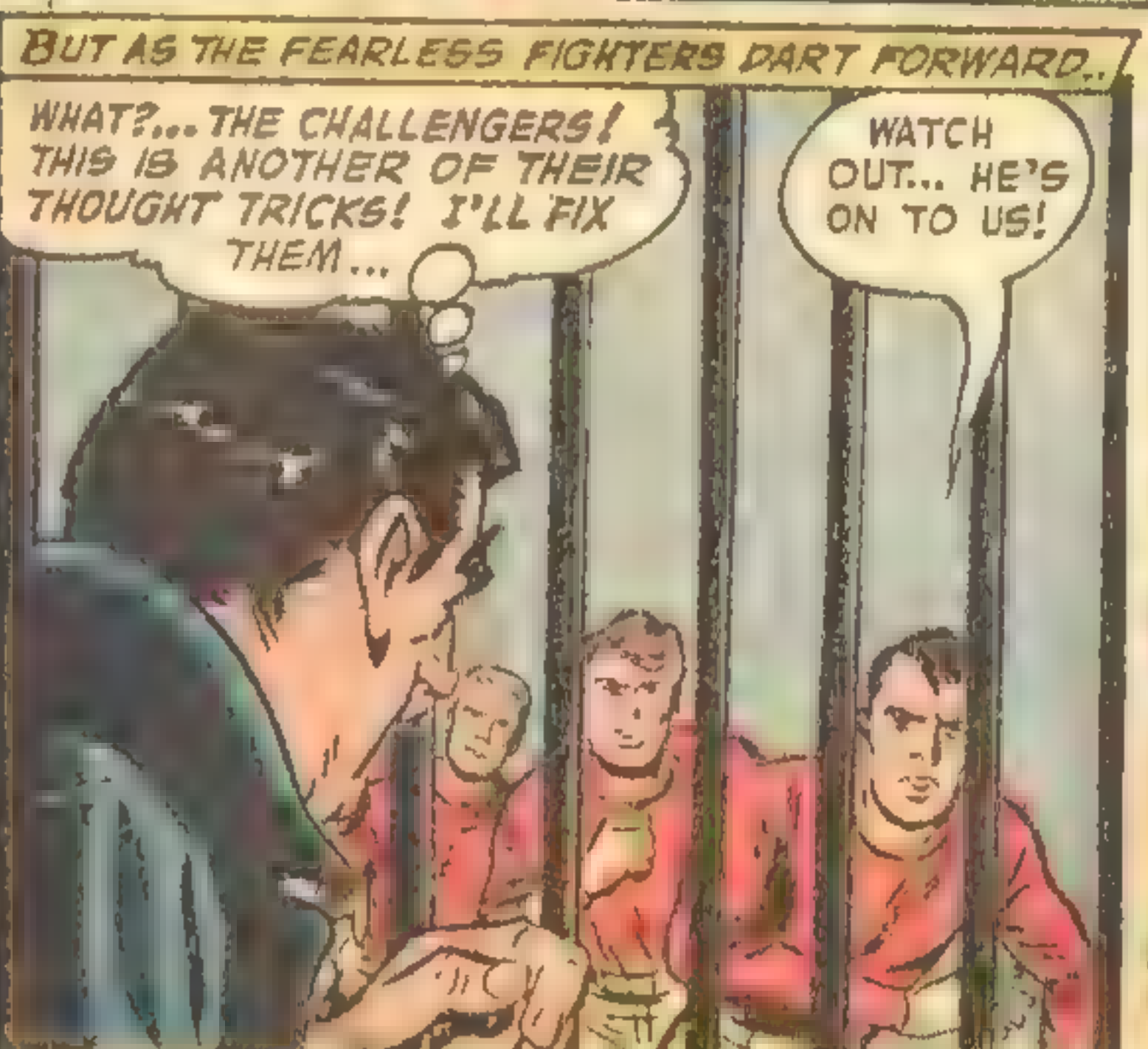
WAAAAA



ONCE AGAIN, ACE SPAWNS AN ENTITY TO FRIGHTEN HIS FOE...

YIPES! I'M... IN A GIANT JAIL CELL! THE WALLS... THEY'RE CLOSING IN ON ME!

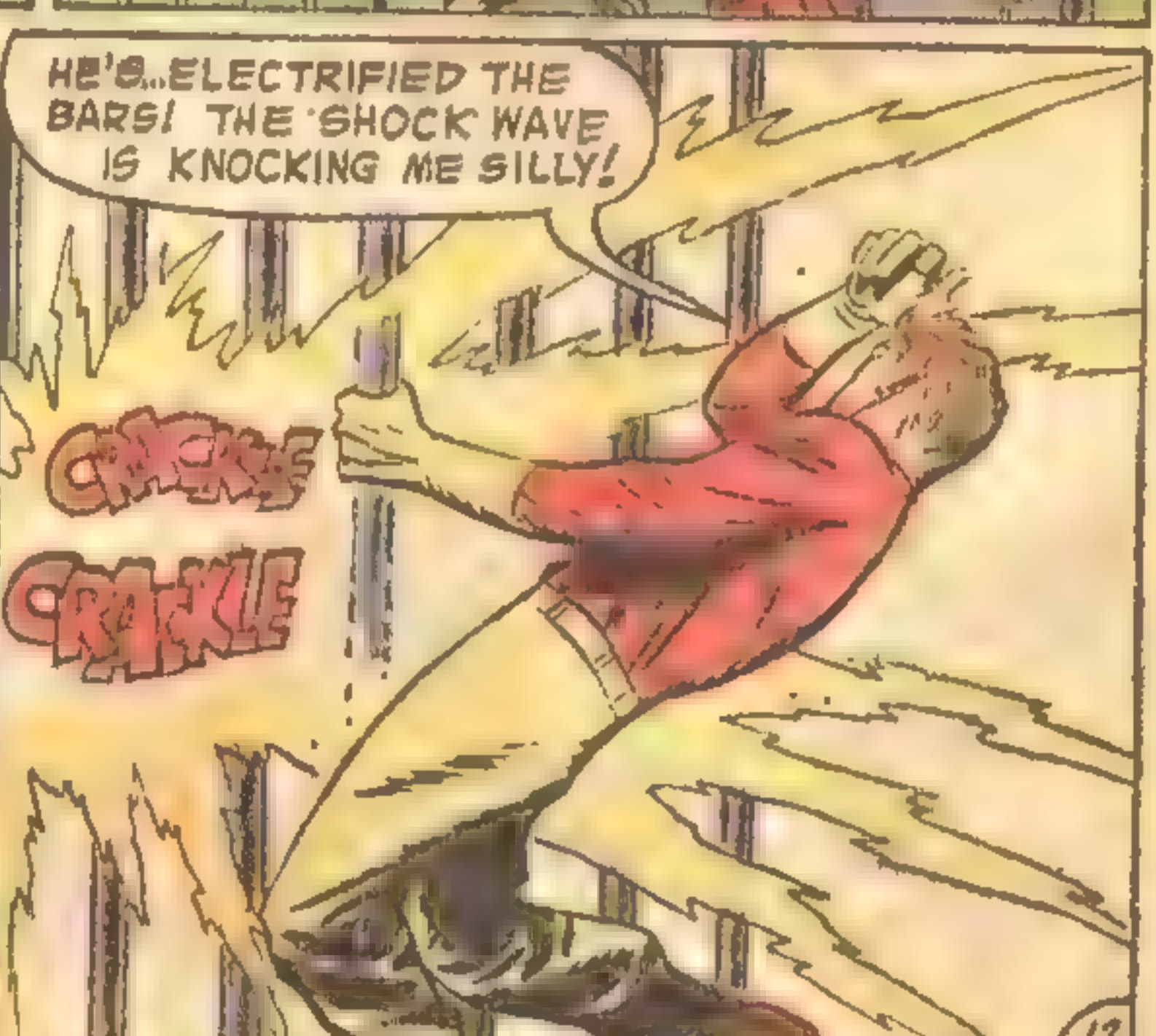
NOW, MEN... LET'S RUSH HIM!



BUT AS THE FEARLESS FIGHTERS DART FORWARD...

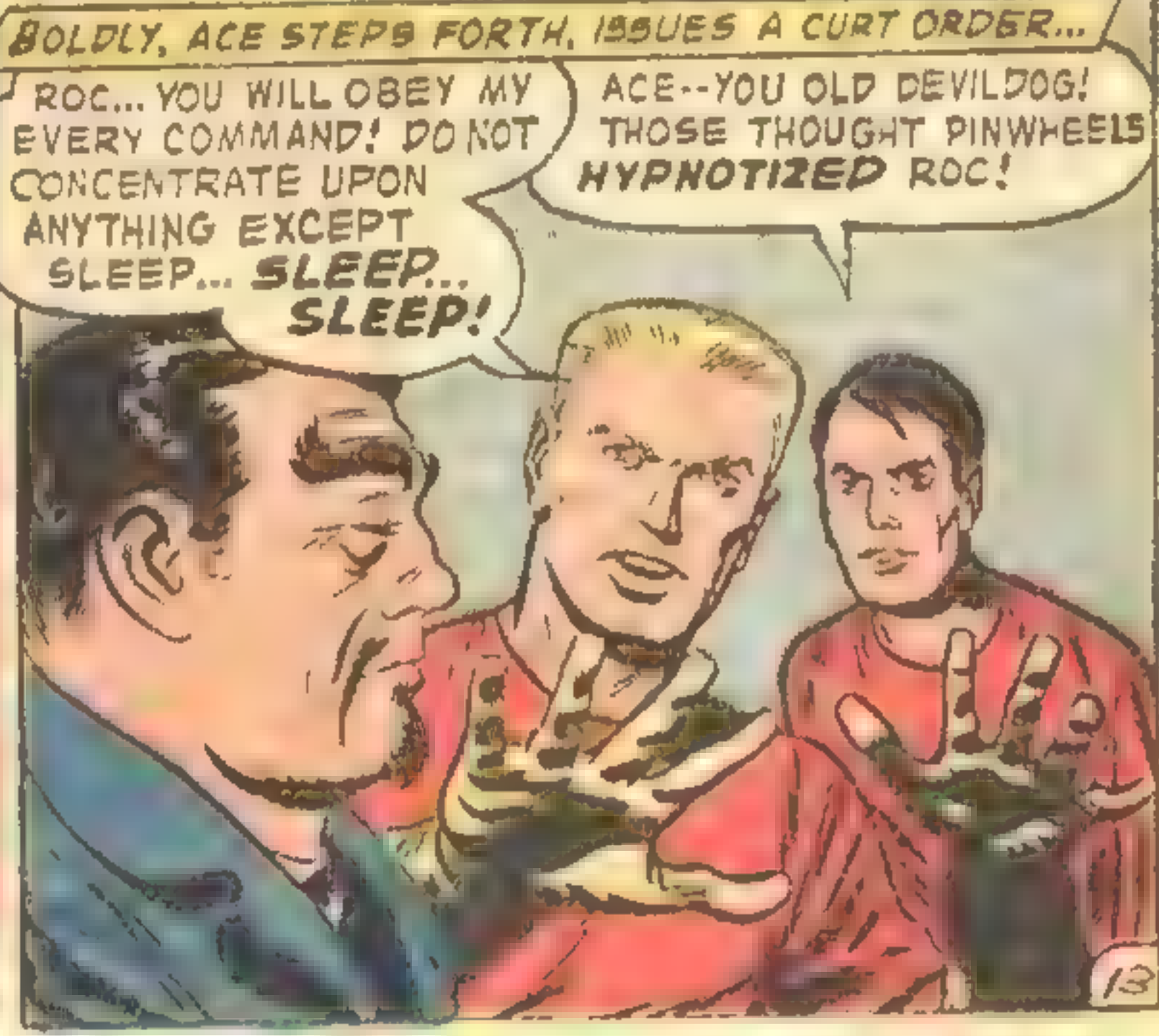
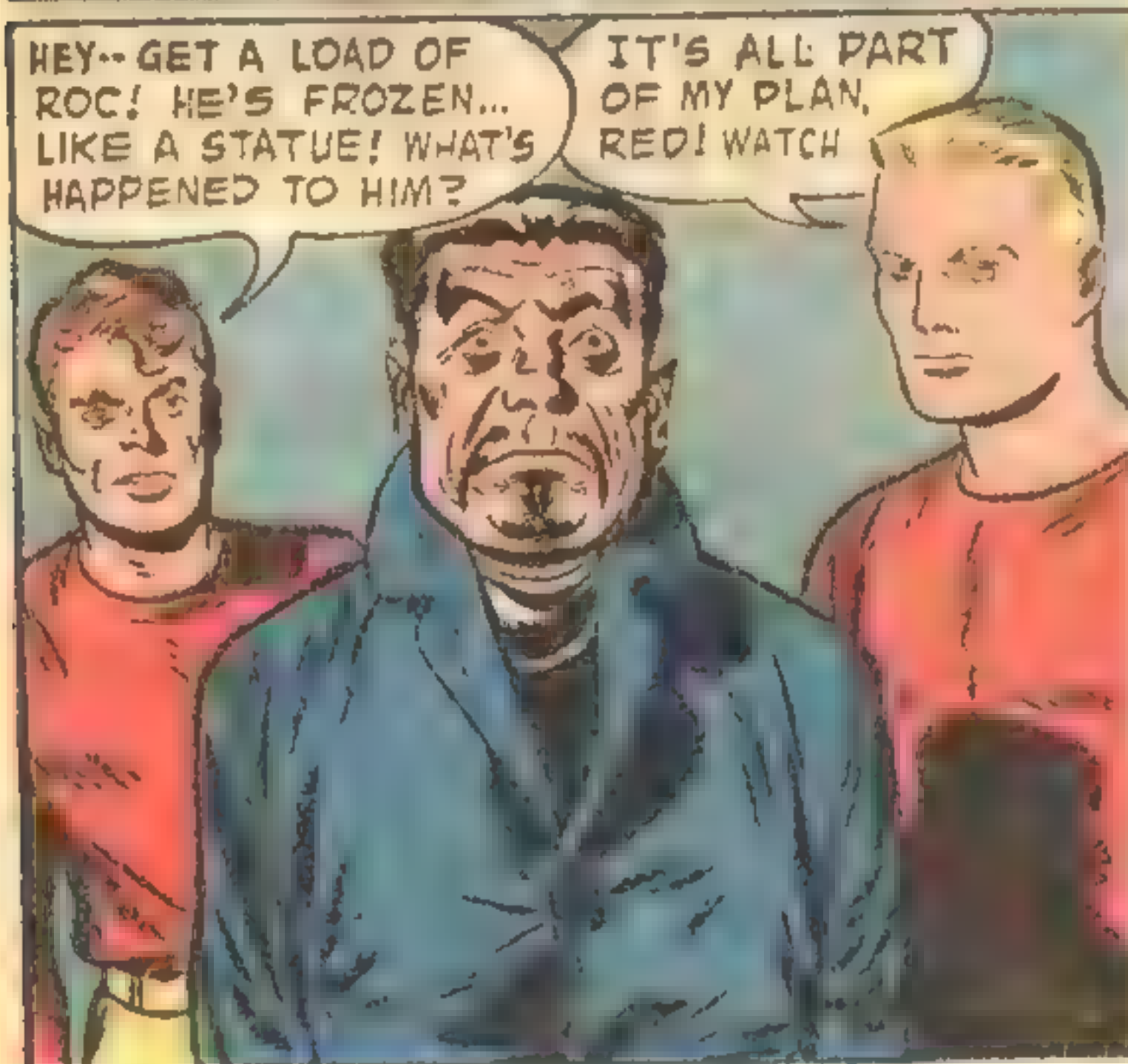
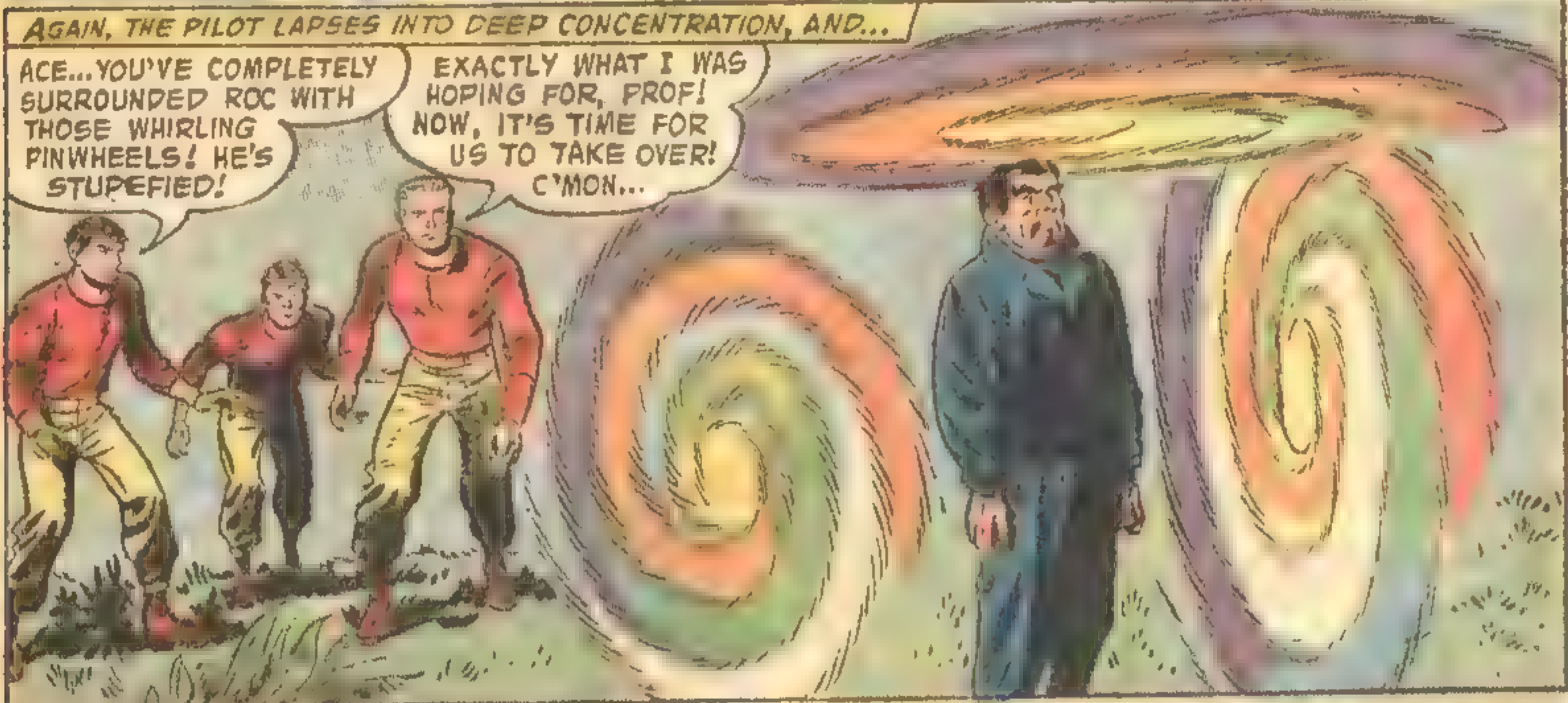
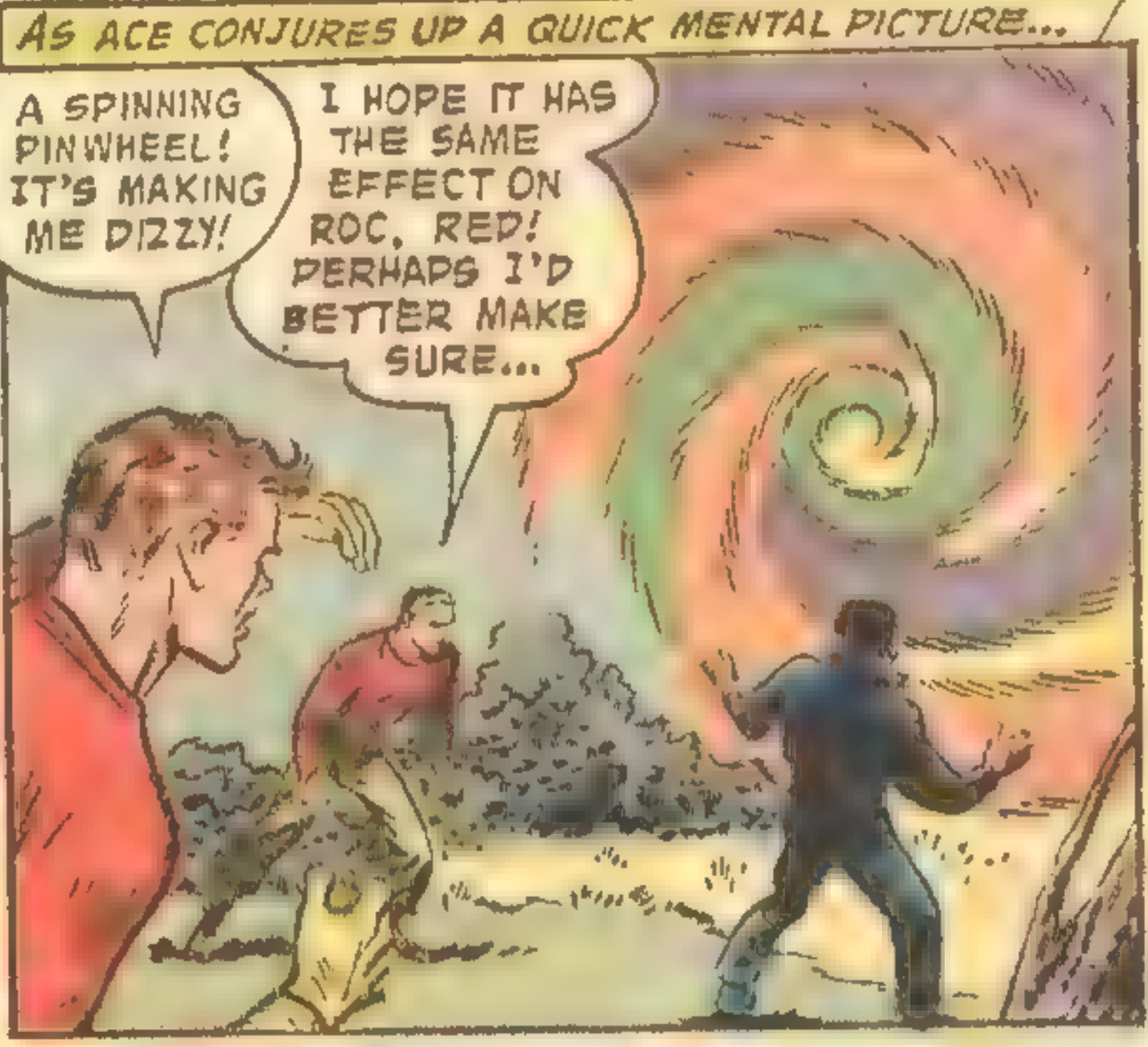
WHAT?... THE CHALLENGERS! THIS IS ANOTHER OF THEIR THOUGHT TRICKS! I'LL FIX THEM...

WATCH OUT... HE'S ON TO US!



HE'S... ELECTRIFIED THE BARS! THE SHOCK WAVE IS KNOCKING ME SILLY!

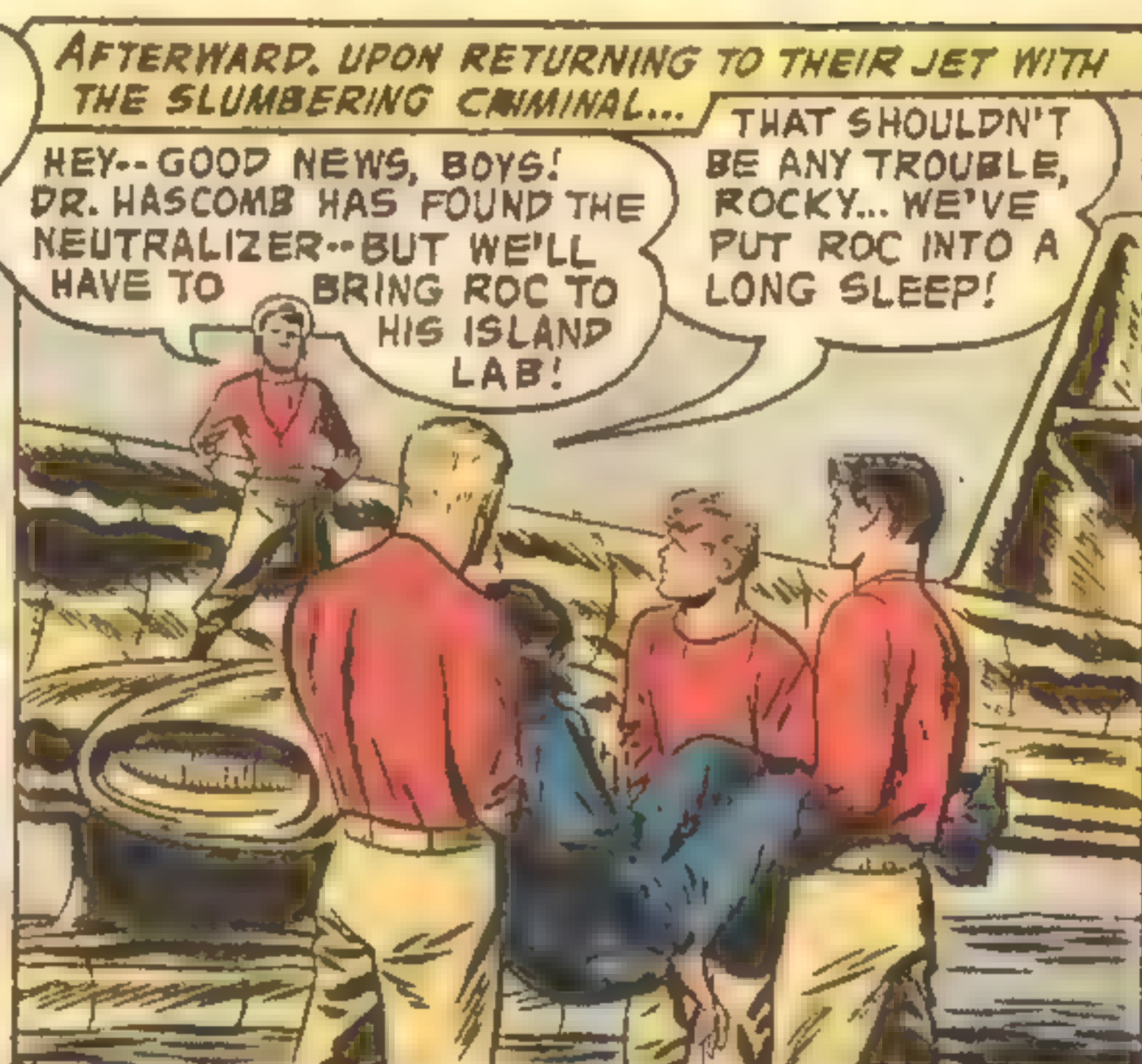
CRACKLE CRACKLE





SURE ENOUGH--
HE'S SNORING!
ROC'S DEAD
ASLEEP!

AND HE'LL REMAIN THAT WAY UNTIL
I BRING HIM OUT OF IT! C'MON,
BOYS-- GIVE US
A HAND!



AFTERWARD, UPON RETURNING TO THEIR JET WITH
THE SLUMBERING CRIMINAL...

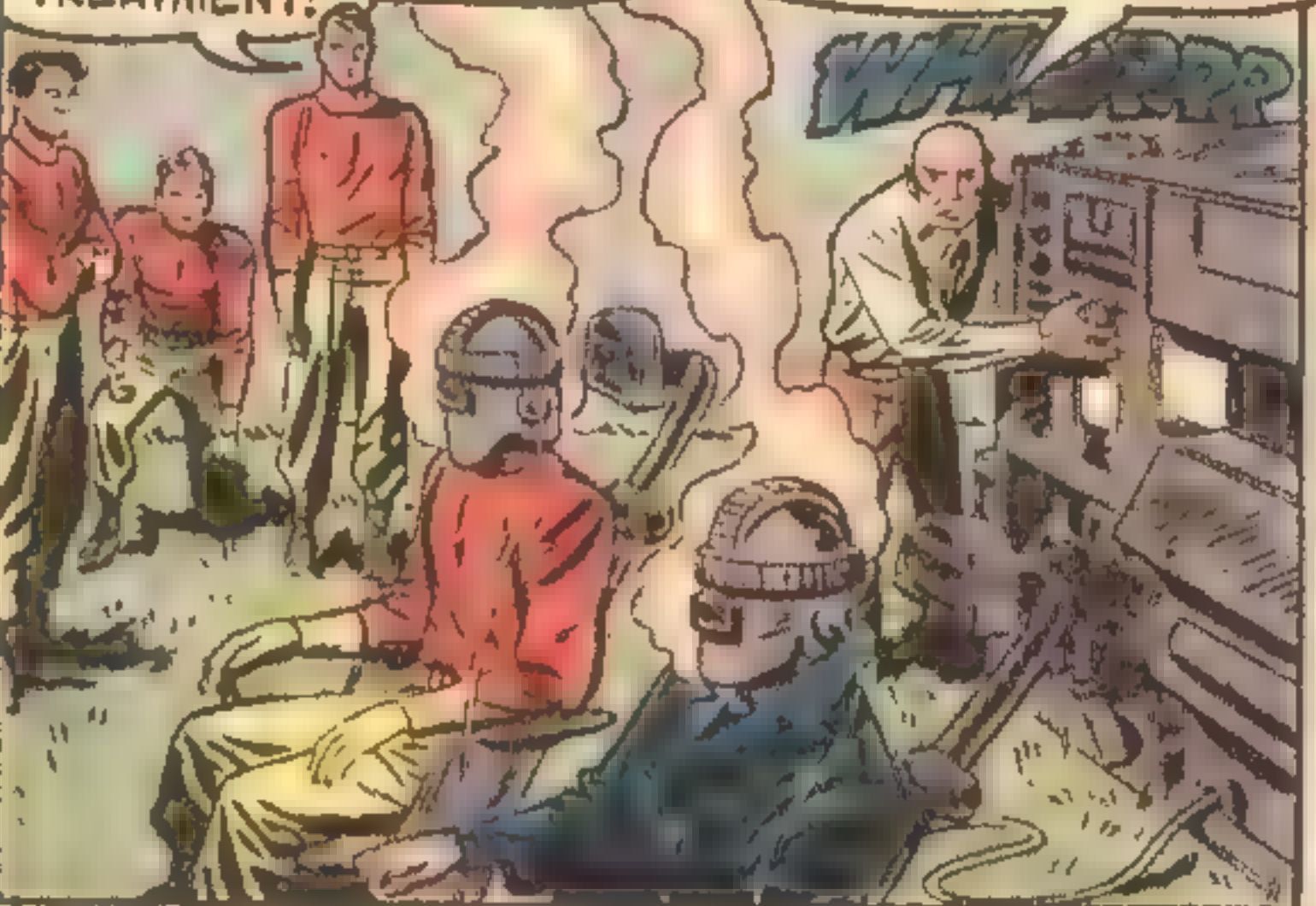
HEY-- GOOD NEWS, BOYS!
DR. HASCOMB HAS FOUND THE
NEUTRALIZER-- BUT WE'LL
HAVE TO BRING ROC TO
HIS ISLAND
LAB!

THAT SHOULDN'T
BE ANY TROUBLE,
ROCKY... WE'VE
PUT ROC INTO A
LONG SLEEP!

AND SO, HOURS LATER, DR. HASCOMB'S BIZARRE
MACHINE AGAIN GOES INTO ACTION...

BUT, DOCTOR-- HOW IS IT
POSSIBLE TO NEUTRALIZE
THEIR FANTASTIC POWER
BY GIVING THEM ANOTHER
TREATMENT?

I HAVE SIMPLY REVERSED
THE MACHINE'S OPERATION,
PROF! IT IS *WITHDRAWING*
THEIR POWERS NOW!



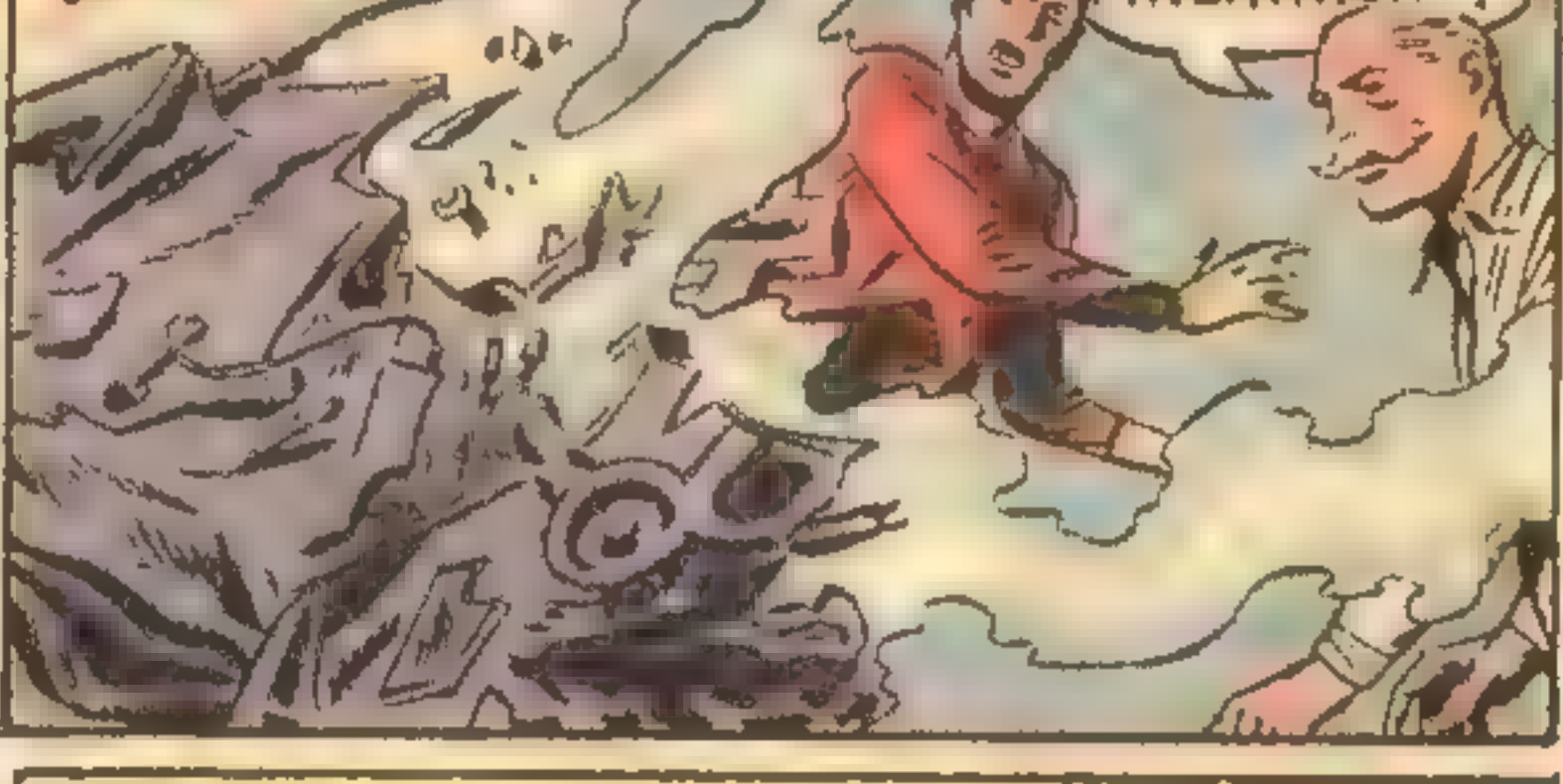
ALL AT ONCE...

HEY! THE THING'S
BLOWING UP!
STOP IT, DOC!

DON'T BE
ALARMED!
I WAS

AWARE THAT
THIS REVERSING
PROCESS COULD
DESTROY THE
MACHINE! IT
ALSO SIGNALS
THE END OF THE
TREATMENT!

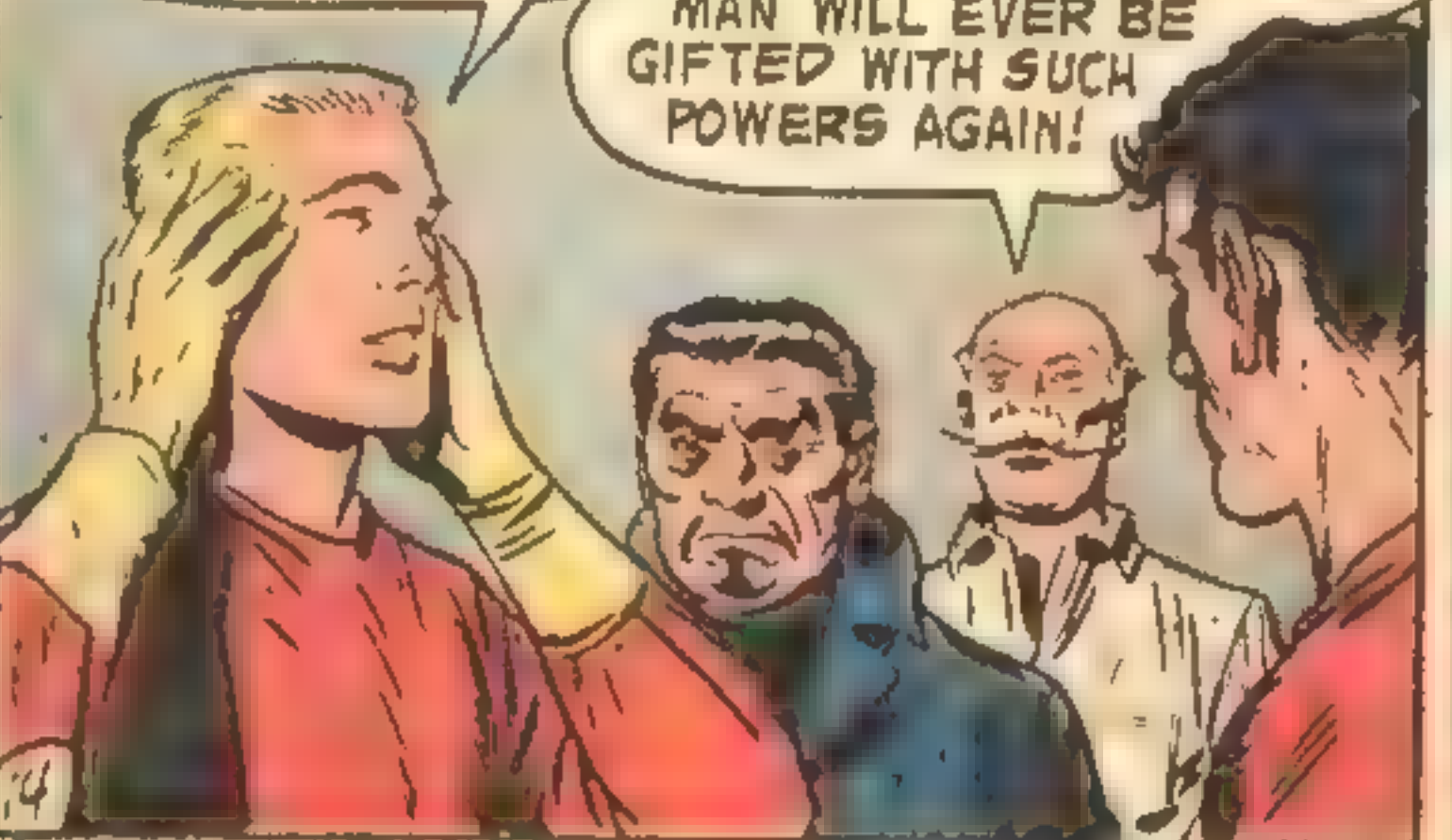
KABOOM!



AND AFTER THE HELMETS HAVE BEEN REMOVED
FROM ACE AND ROC...

IT WORKED! I'VE CONCEIVED
SEVERAL MENTAL PICTURES...
AND NONE OF THEM CAME
INTO EXISTENCE!

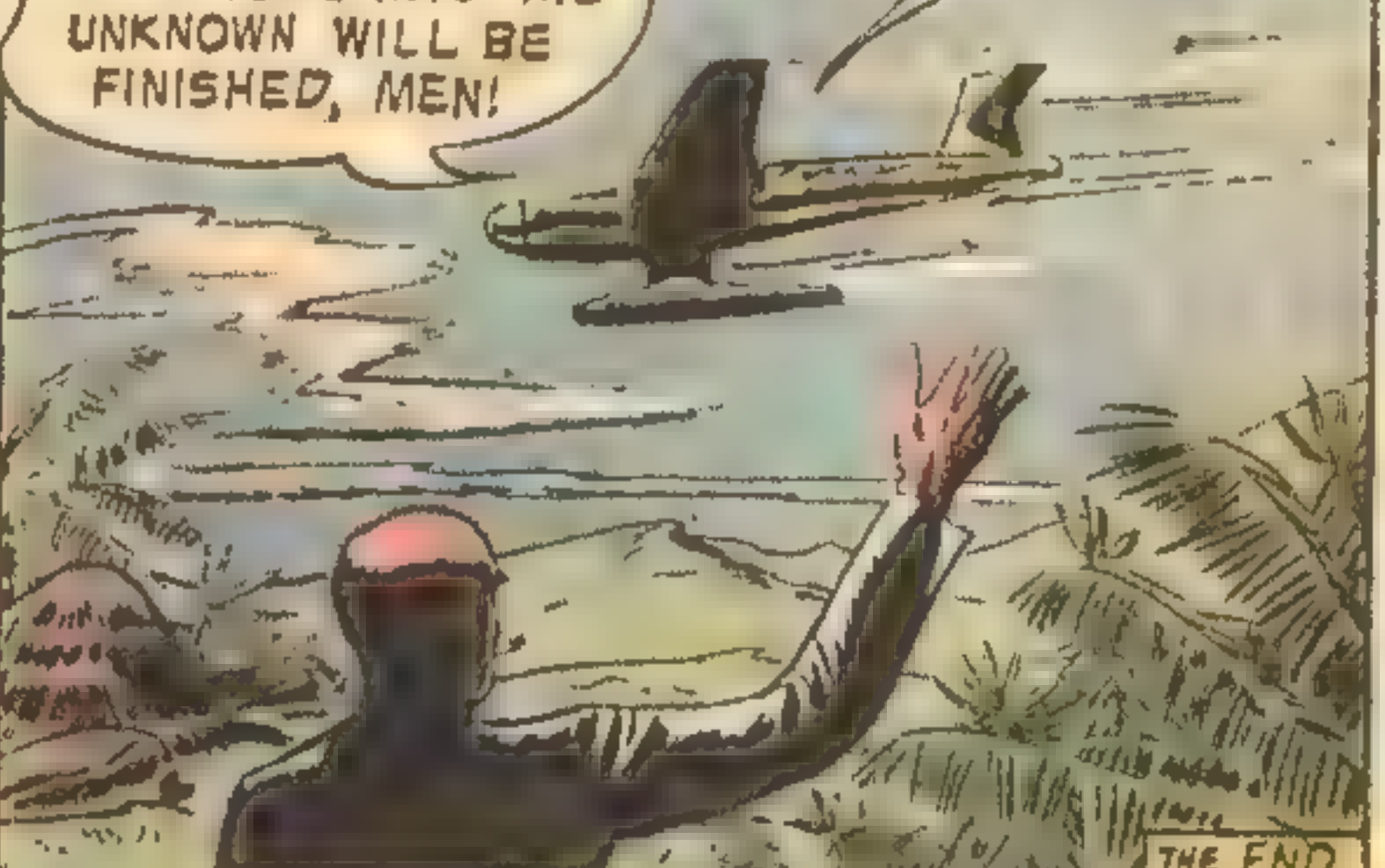
THAT'S THE BEST
NEWS YOU COULD
GIVE ME! WITH
THE DESTRUCTION
OF MY MACHINE, NO
MAN WILL EVER BE
GIFTED WITH SUCH
POWERS AGAIN!



LATER, AS THE CHALLENGERS' JET THUNDERS
THROUGH THE AIR...

ONCE WE PLACE ROC
IN THE HANDS OF THE
POLICE, ANOTHER
ADVENTURE INTO THE
UNKNOWN WILL BE
FINISHED, MEN!

YES... UNTIL WE
ACCEPT THE *NEXT*
CHALLENGE!



THE END.



MAN MAY BE THE MASTER OF THE EARTH-- BUT WHAT IS HIS STANDING IN THE UNIVERGE? WHAT OTHER FOOTSTEPS TREAD THE DARK, UNEXPLORED VASTNESS BEYOND THE WORLD WE KNOW? THIS QUESTION LOOMS LARGE IN THE LIVES OF THE CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN WHEN THEY FIND THEMSELVES IN A SITUATION WHICH DEMANDS THAT THEY EITHER DIE AS MEN--OR LIVE AS...

THE HUMAN PETS

By JACK KIRBY

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN

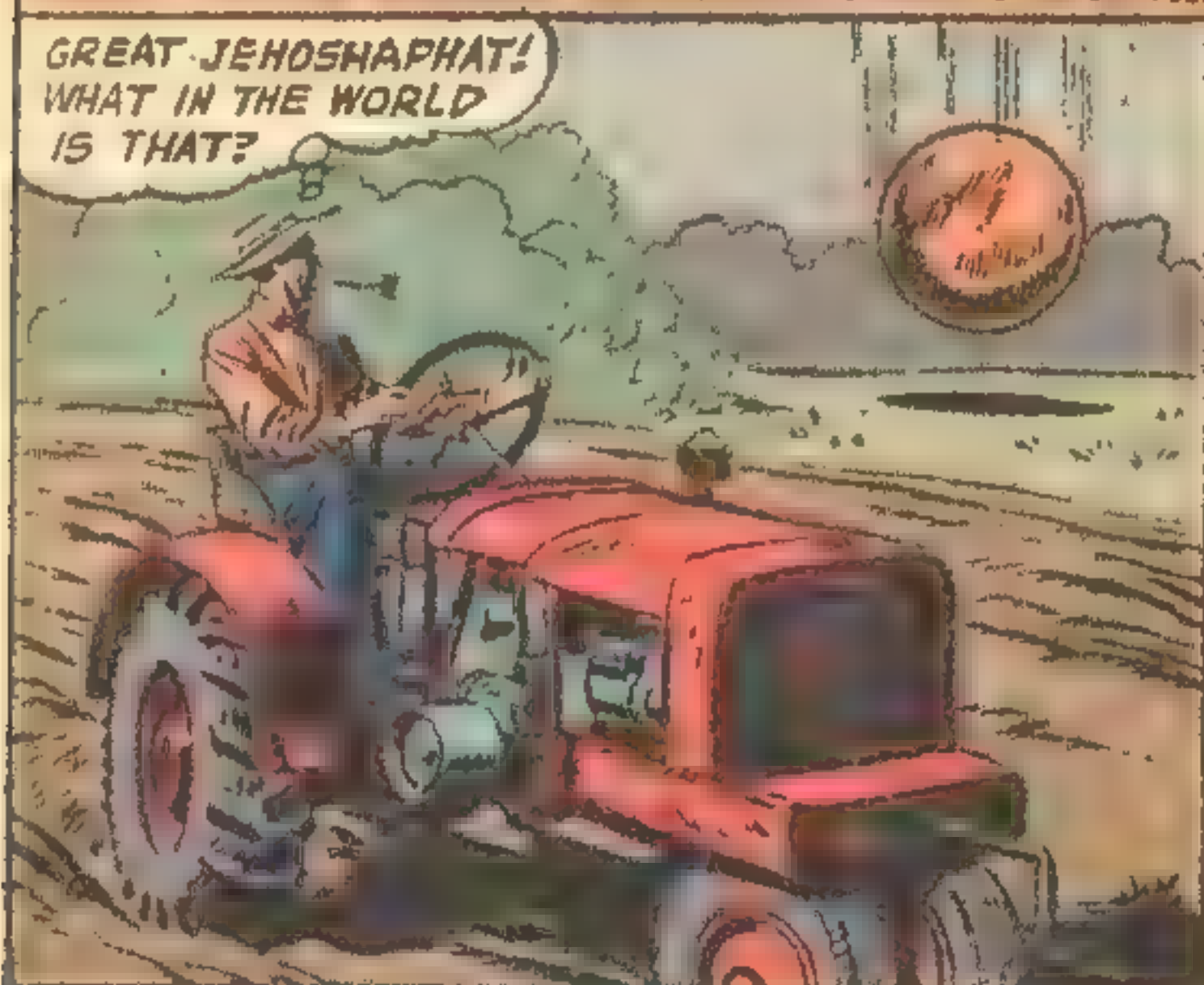
THIS THING THAT'S CAGED US IN IS TRYING TO MAKE US PERFORM LIKE TRAINED FLEAS!

HEY, YOU! CUT THAT OUT!

IT DOESN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT WE ARE! WE'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO BREAK OUT OF HERE!

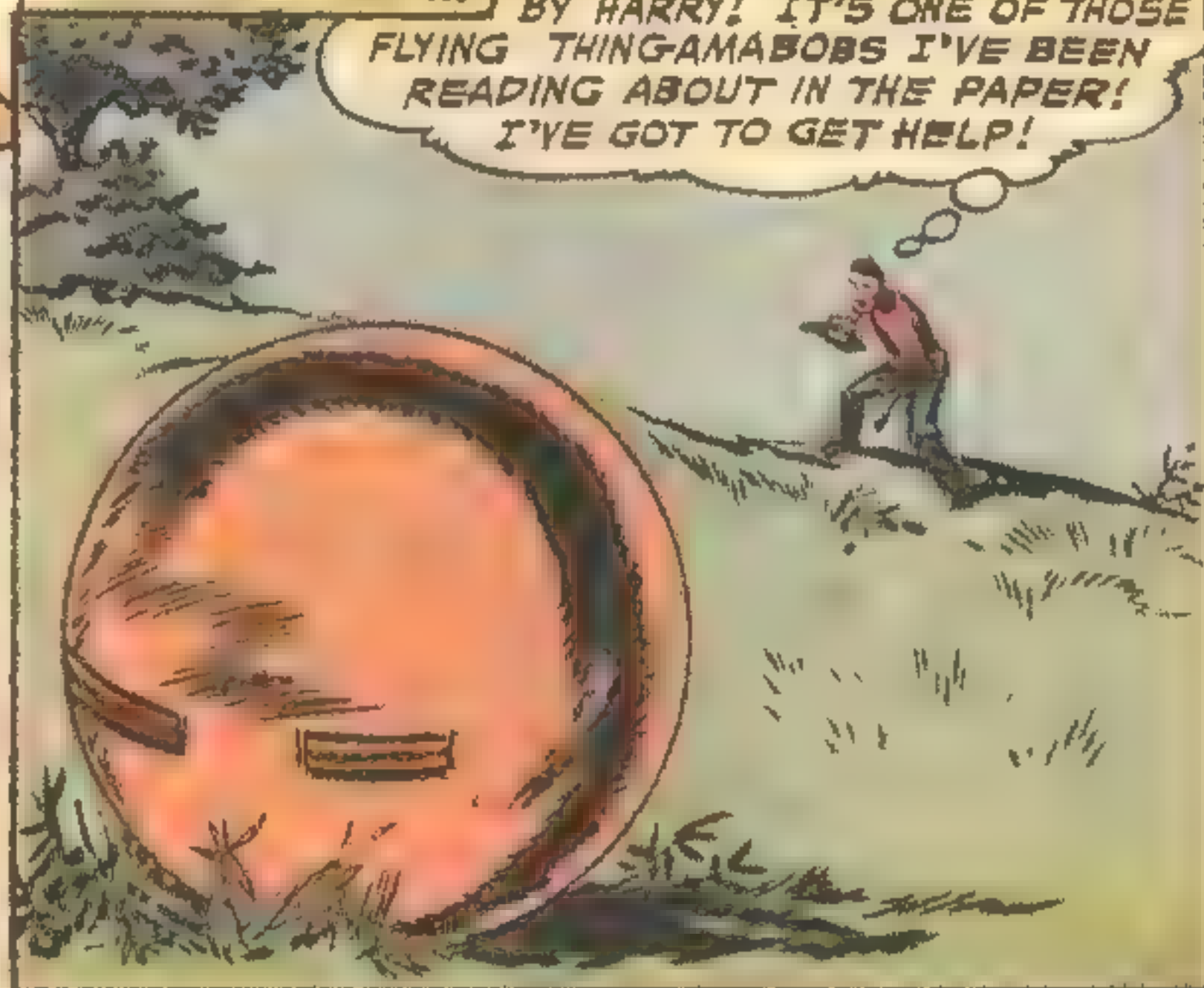
THE FANTASTIC CAN OCCUR AS CASUALLY AS THE COMMONPLACE! FOR INSTANCE, ONE DAY, ABNER JENKINS TURNS FROM HIS FARMING CHORES, MORE WITH WONDER THAN ALARM, AS A LARGE SPHERE DESCENDS FROM THE SKY...

GREAT JEHOASHAPHAT! WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THAT?



PLACIDLY AND SILENTLY, THE GLOBE SETTLES IN JENKINS' FIELD...

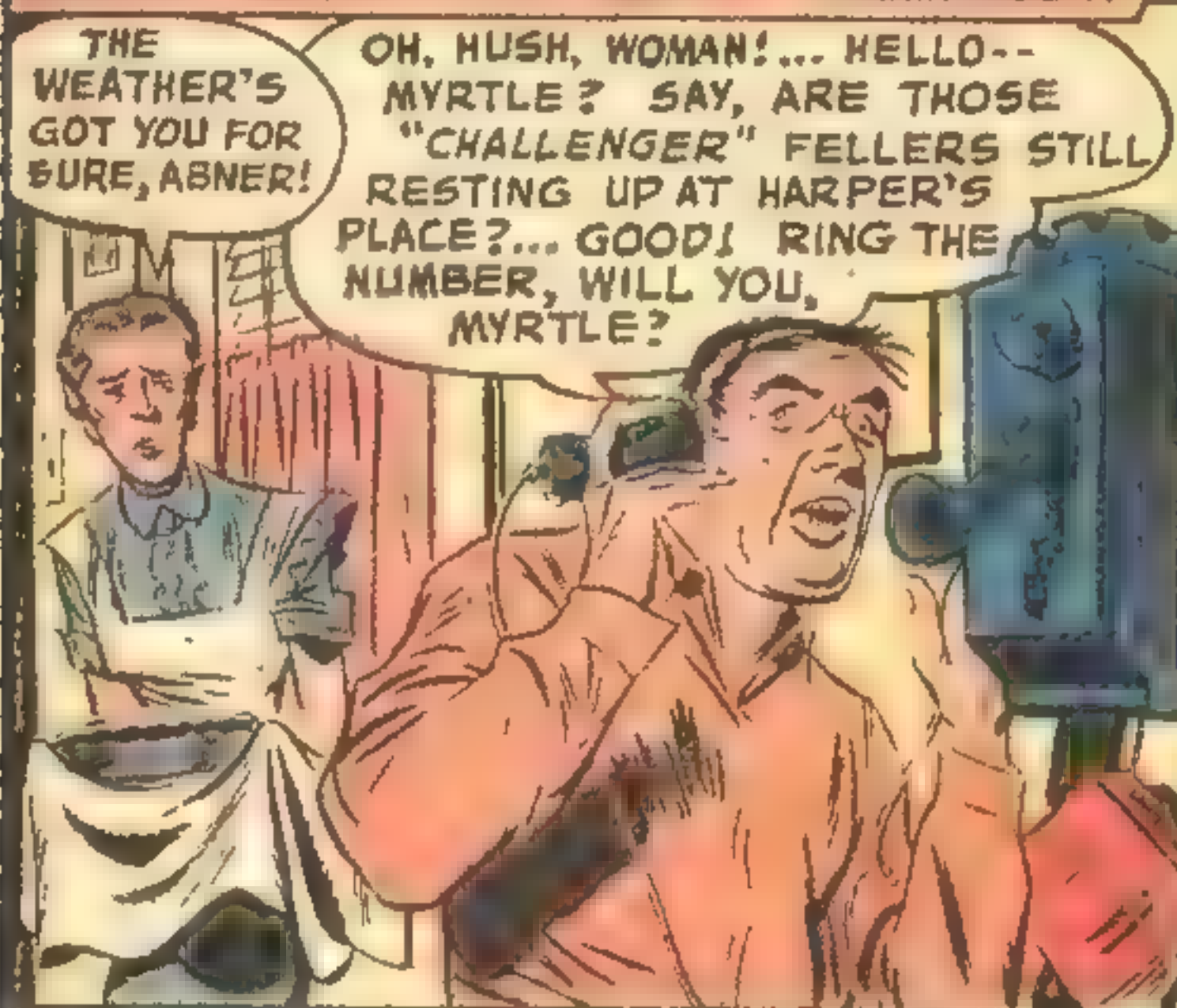
BY HARRY! IT'S ONE OF THOSE FLYING THING-AMABOBS I'VE BEEN READING ABOUT IN THE PAPER! I'VE GOT TO GET HELP!



SOON AFTER, AT THE JENKINS' FARMHOUSE...

THE WEATHER'S GOT YOU FOR SURE, ABNER!

OH, HUSH, WOMAN!... HELLO-- MYRTLE? SAY, ARE THOSE "CHALLENGER" FELLERS STILL RESTING UP AT HARPER'S PLACE?... GOOD! RING THE NUMBER, WILL YOU, MYRTLE?



SOON AFTER THEY RECEIVE HIS CALL, THE CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN ARRIVE...

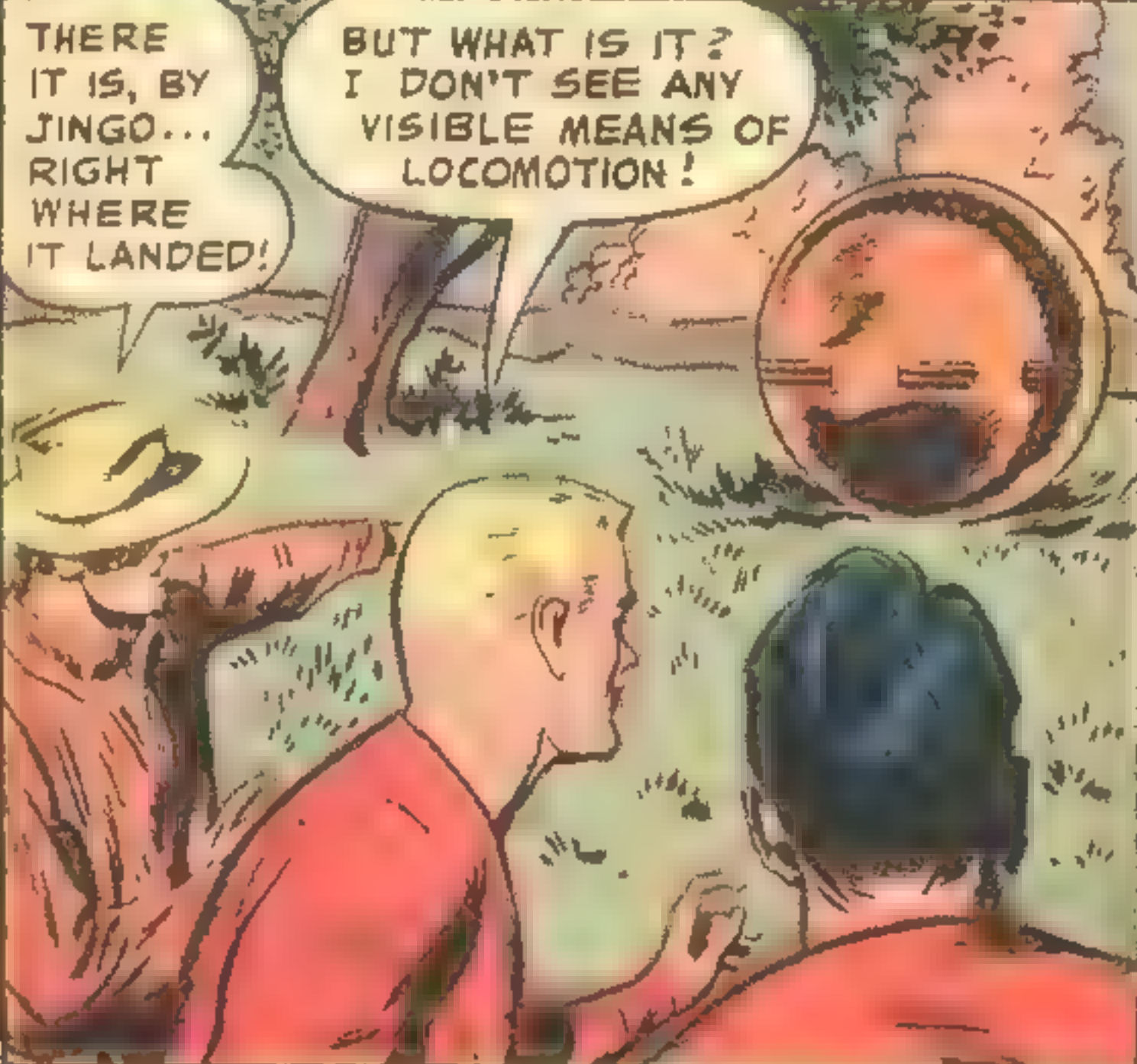
WE CAME IMMEDIATELY--

I HOPE IT'S STILL THERE! JUST FOLLOW ME!



THERE IT IS, BY JINGO... RIGHT WHERE IT LANDED!

BUT WHAT IS IT? I DON'T SEE ANY VISIBLE MEANS OF LOCOMOTION!



MEN, I SUGGEST WE APPROACH IT CAREFULLY! THERE'S NO TELLING--

LOOK, ACE! THERE'S A DOOR SLIDING OPEN!



WARILY, THE CHALLENGERS MOVE FORWARD, ANXIOUS FOR A GLIMPSE OF THE SPHERE'S INTERIOR...

MAYBE IF WE GET A LITTLE CLOSER--

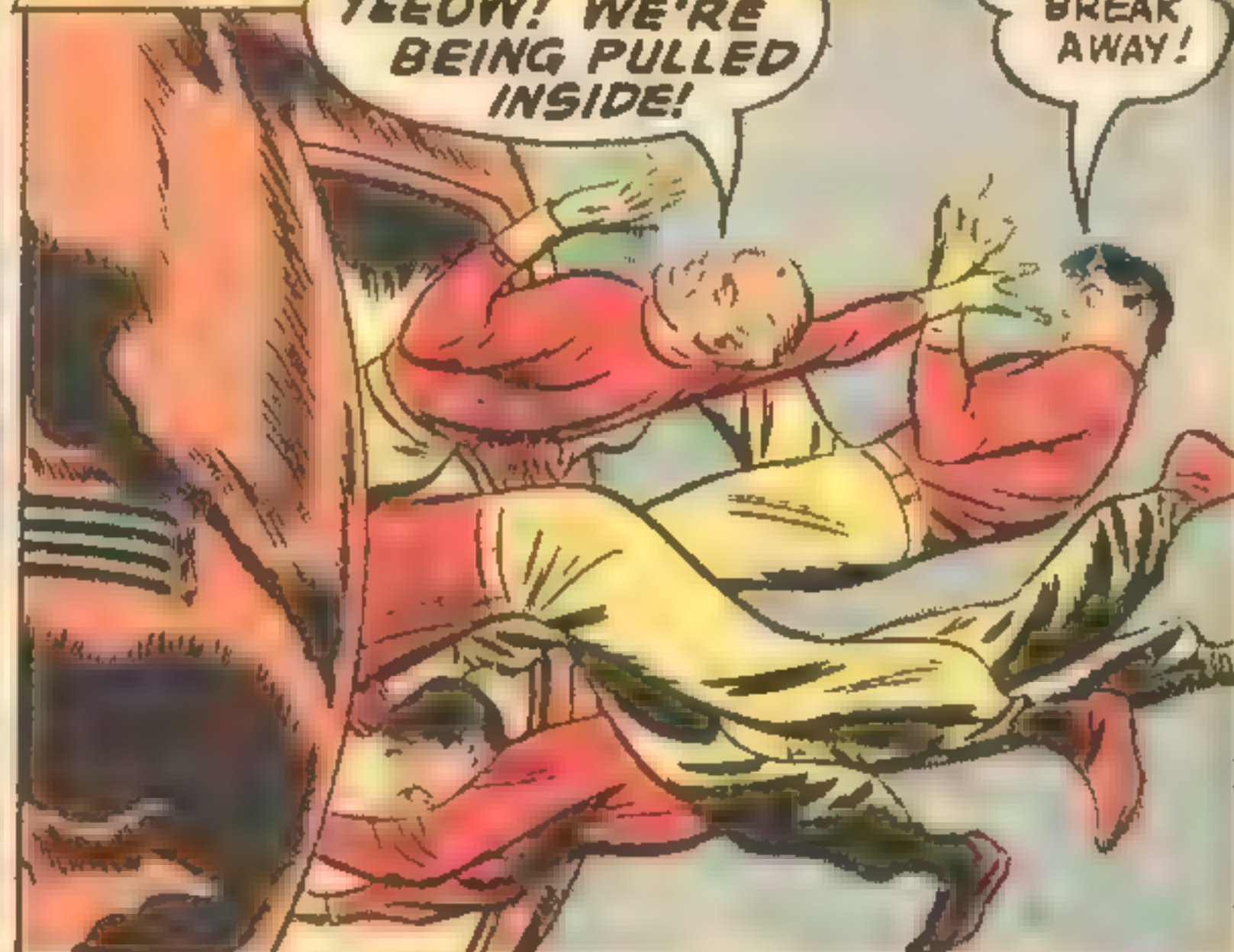
EASY... WATCH YOUR STEP!



SUDDENLY, A LOW WHINE AND A POWERFUL SUCTION EMANATE FROM THE STRANGE SPHERE...

YEEOW! WE'RE BEING PULLED INSIDE!

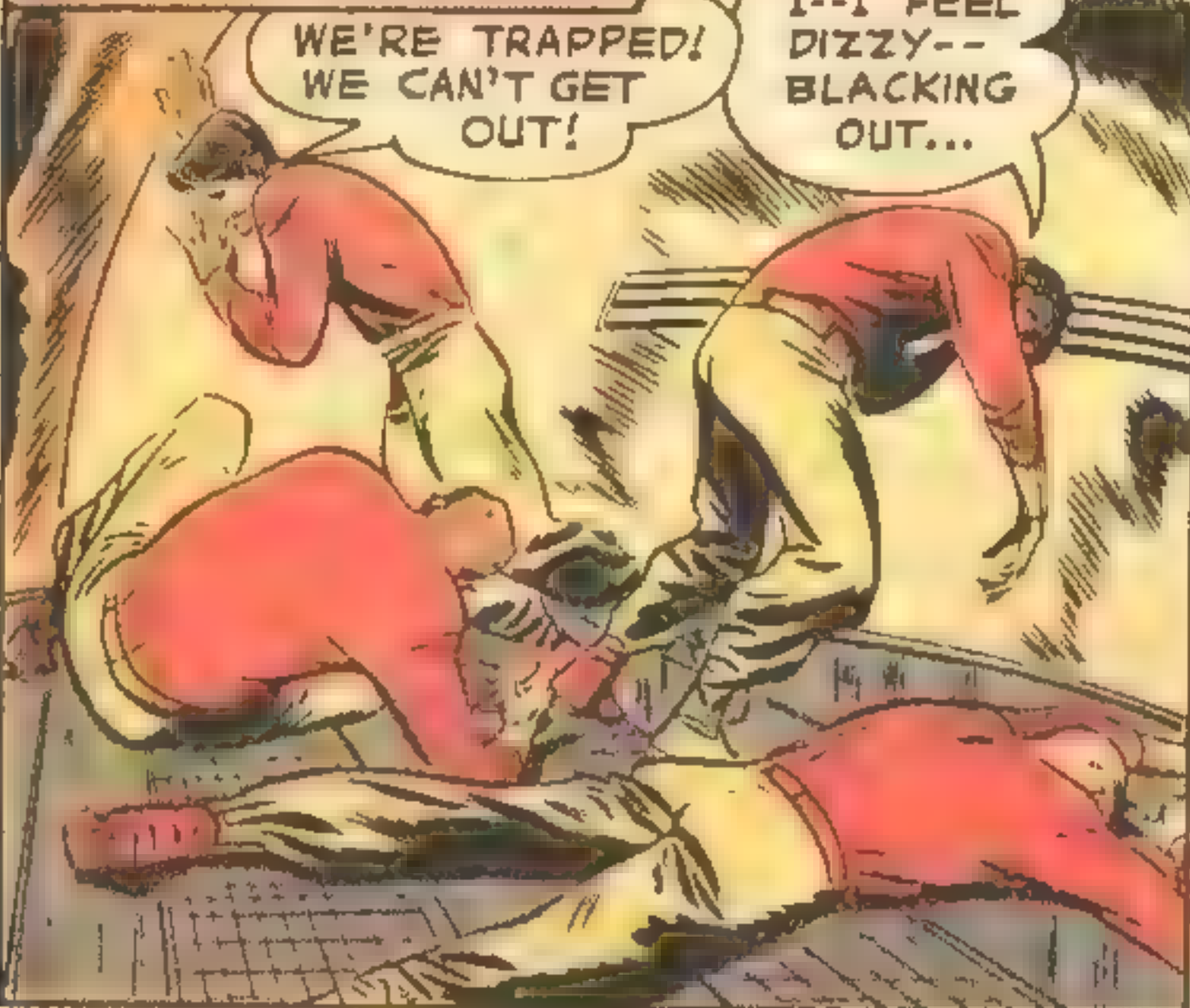
WE CAN'T BREAK AWAY!



NO SOONER ARE THE MEN SWEEPED IN THAN THE DOOR SNAPS SHUT!

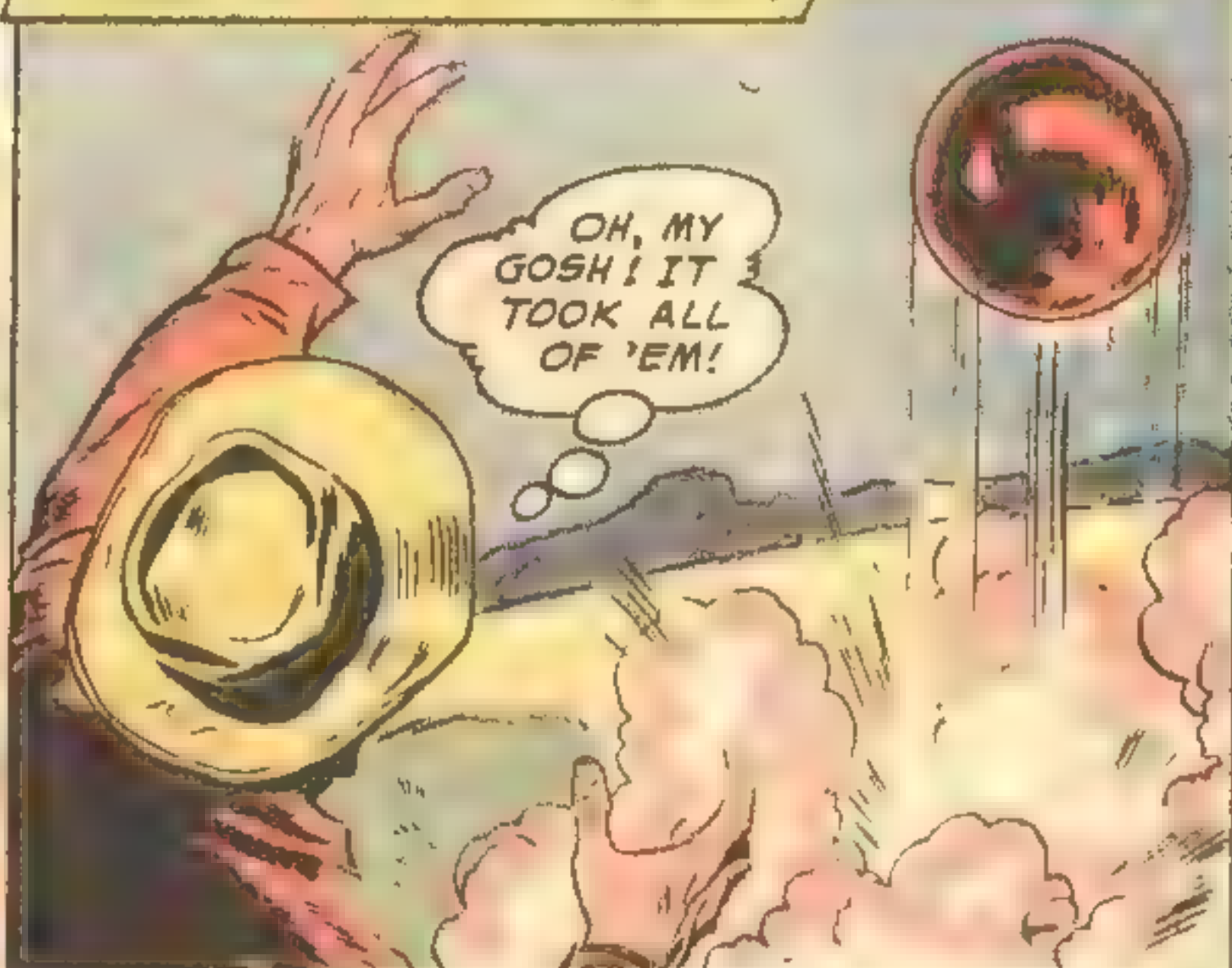
WE'RE TRAPPED! WE CAN'T GET OUT!

I--I FEEL DIZZY-- BLACKING OUT...



WITH A THUNDEROUS ROAR, THE BIZARRE CRAFT RISES SWIFTLY INTO THE SKY!

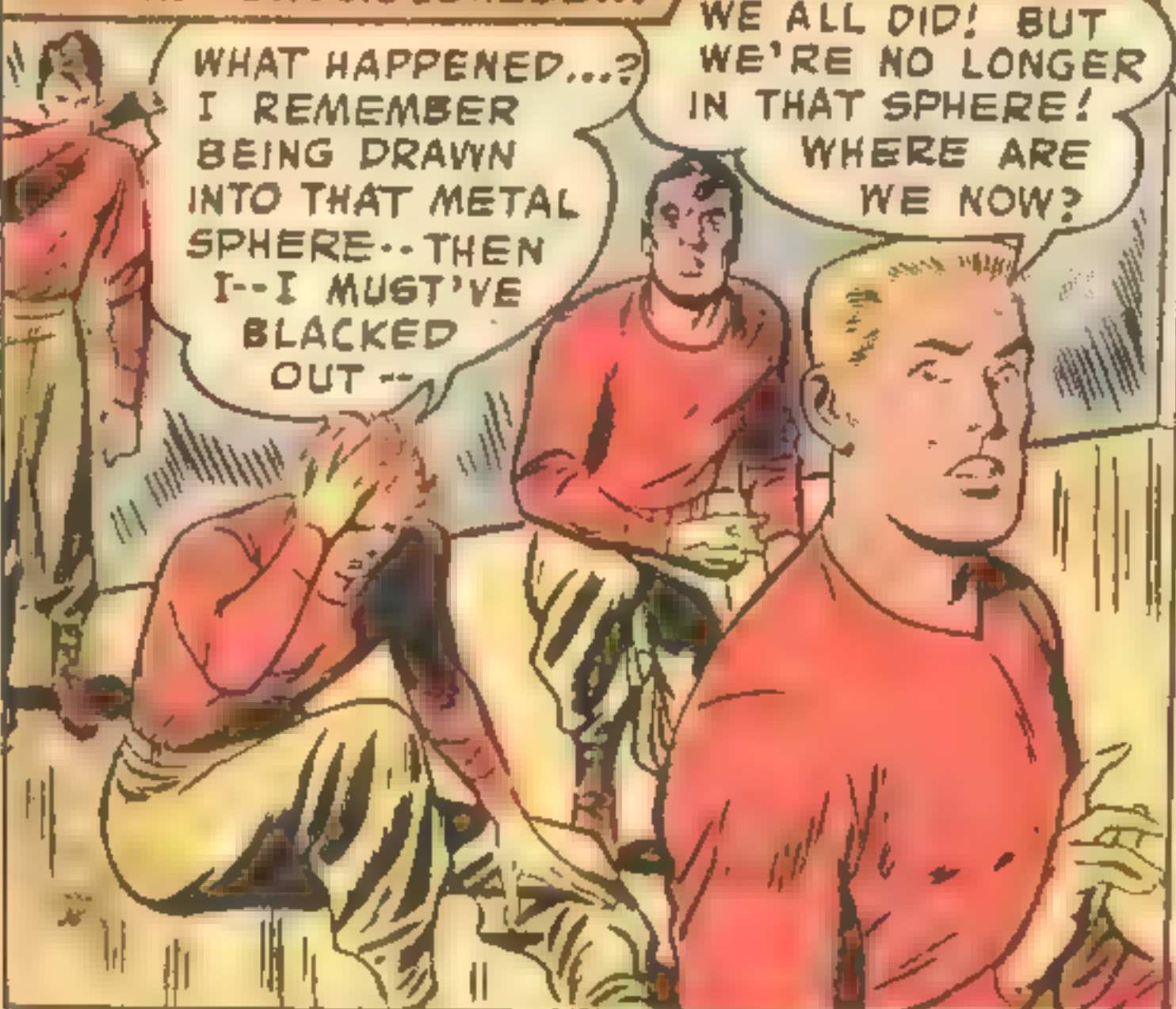
OH, MY GOSH! IT TOOK ALL OF 'EM!



SOME TIME LATER, WHEN THE CHALLENGERS REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS...

WHAT HAPPENED...? I REMEMBER BEING DRAWN INTO THAT METAL SPHERE-- THEN I--I MUST'VE BLACKED OUT--

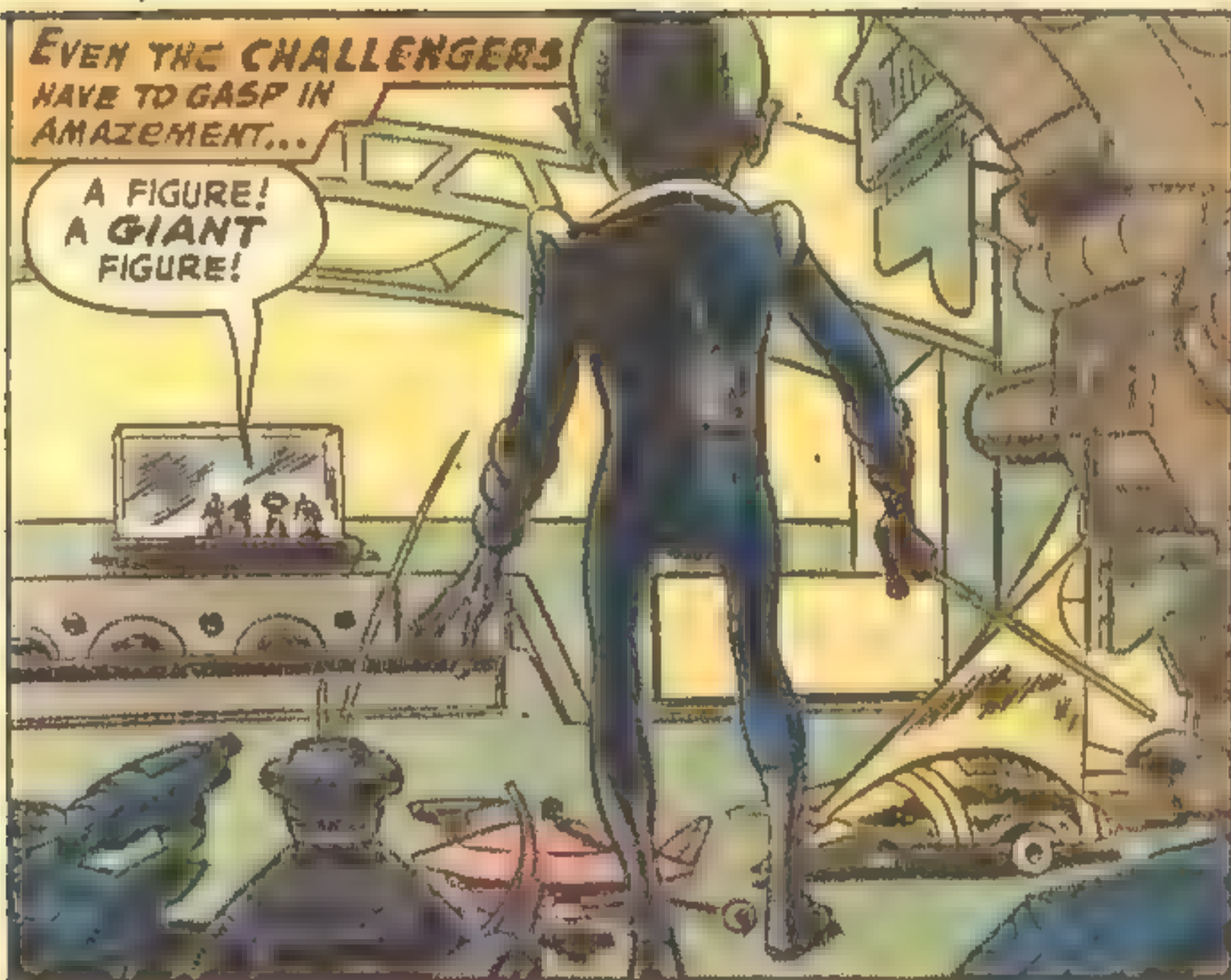
WE ALL DID! BUT WE'RE NO LONGER IN THAT SPHERE! WHERE ARE WE NOW?



IN SOME SORT OF TRANSPARENT TANK OR CAGE-- AND I THINK IT'S NOT ON EARTH!

I SEE SOMETHING MOVING... SOMETHING BIG! IT'S COMING TOWARD US!

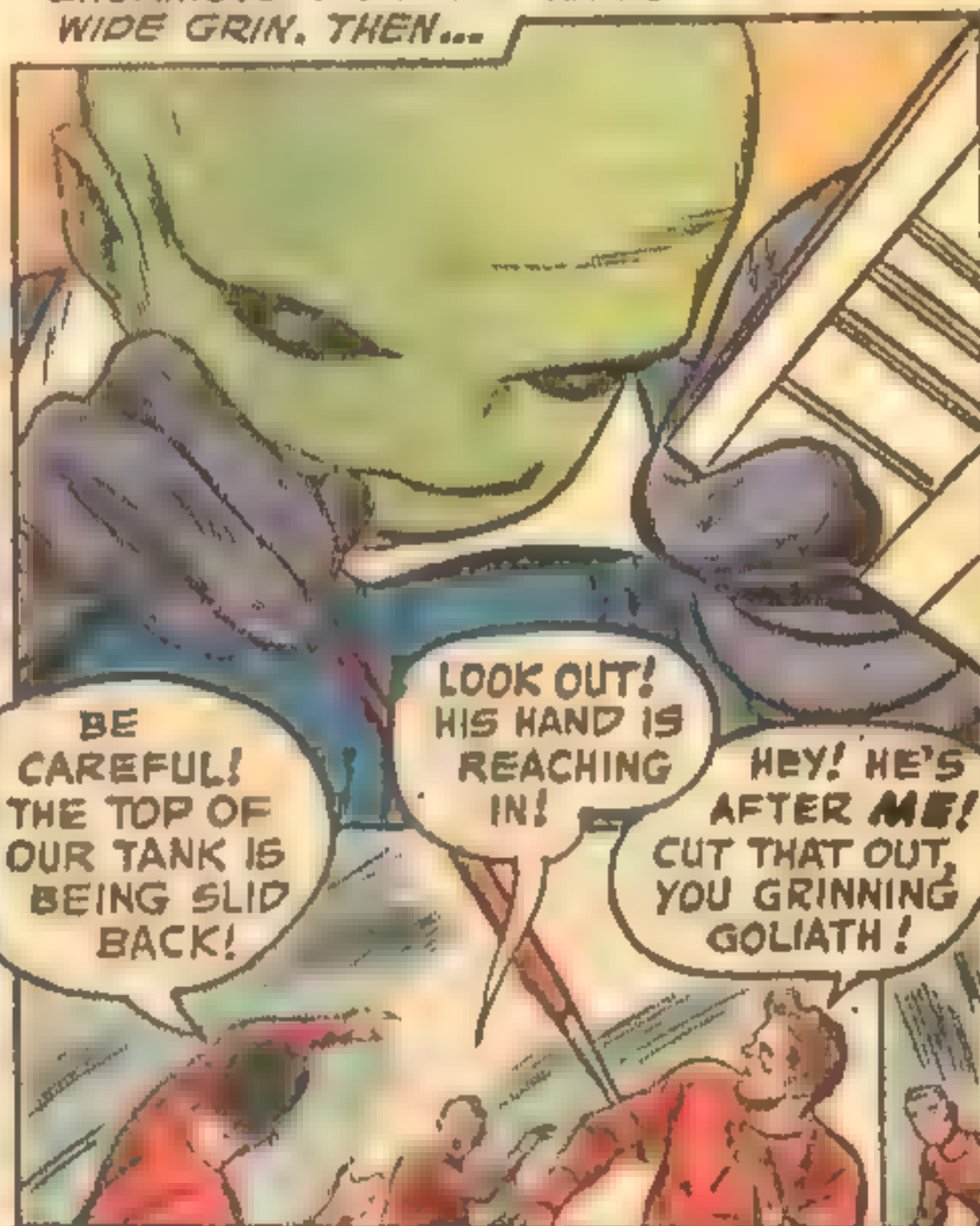




EVEN THE CHALLENGERS HAVE TO GASP IN AMAZEMENT...

A FIGURE!
A GIANT
FIGURE!

HUGE EYES BEAM BRIGHTLY, AND THE ENORMOUS MOUTH BREAKS INTO A WIDE GRIN, THEN...



BE CAREFUL!
THE TOP OF
OUR TANK IS
BEING SLID
BACK!

LOOK OUT!
HIS HAND IS
REACHING
IN!

HEY! HE'S
AFTER ME!
CUT THAT OUT,
YOU GRINNING
GOLIATH!

AS THE MEN SCURRY ABOUT TO ESCAPE THE PROBING ROD, GARGANTUAN LAUGHTER ECHOES IN THE AIR!



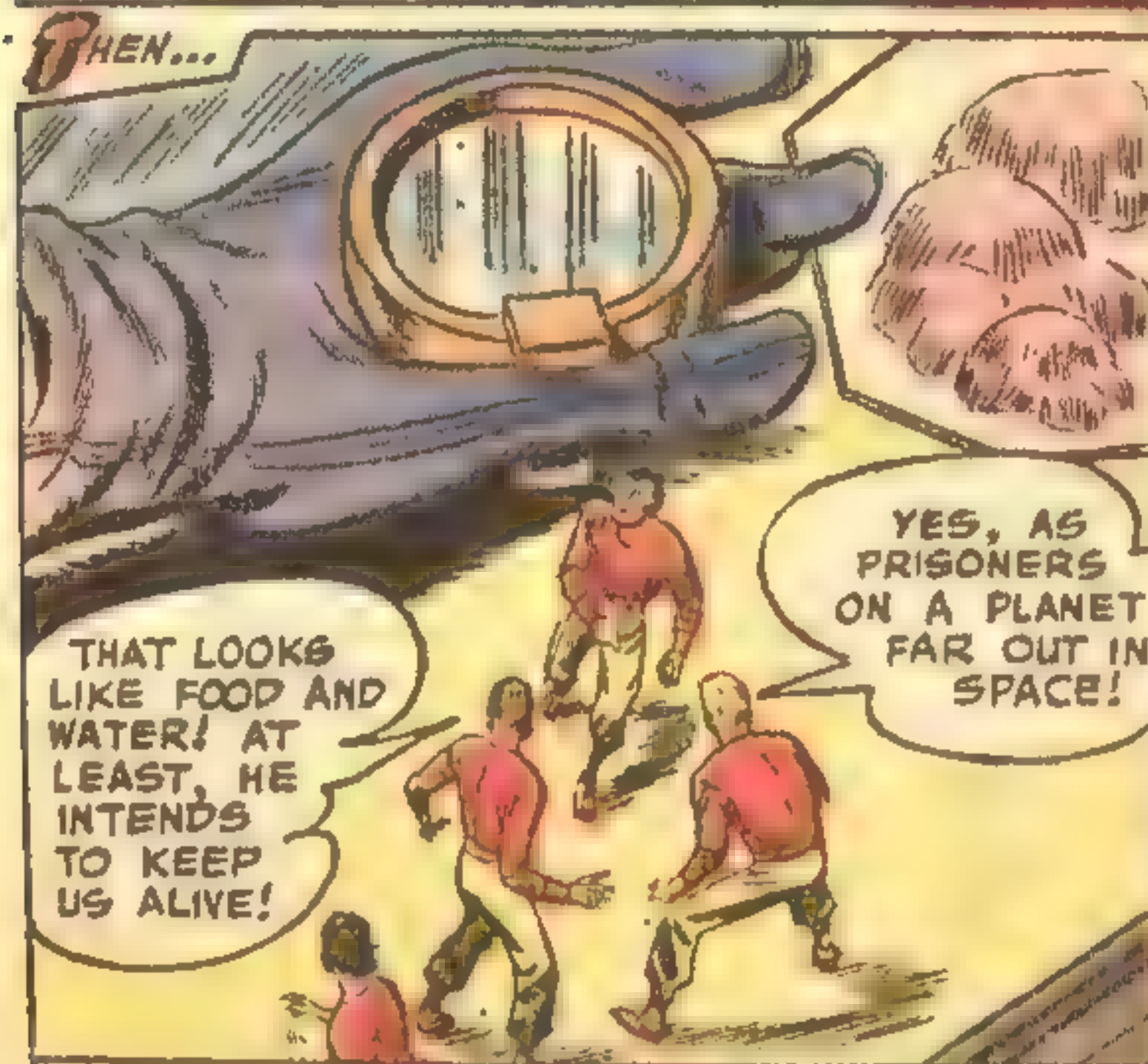
I'M NOT TAKING ANY MORE OF THIS! I'LL CLIMB UP THIS THING, AND--

DON'T BE A FOOL!
YOU'LL BE HURT
IF HE SHAKES
YOU OFF!

HAHAHA

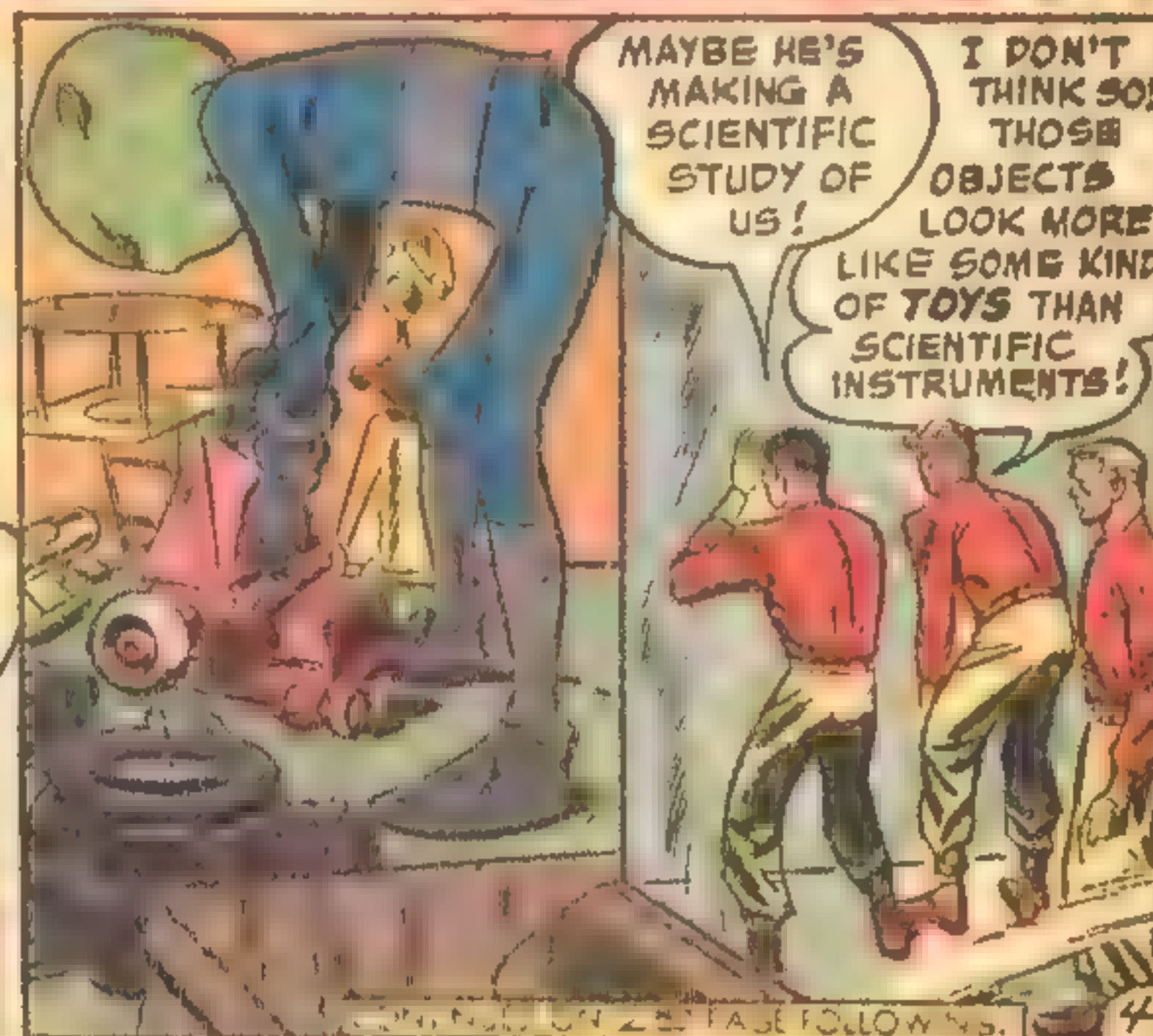
HE'S WITHDRAWN THE ROD! IT LOOKS LIKE HE WAS JUST AMUSING HIMSELF!

IT'S HUMILIATING! WE'RE NOT TRAINED FLEAS! BE ALERT! HE'S UP TO SOMETHING!...



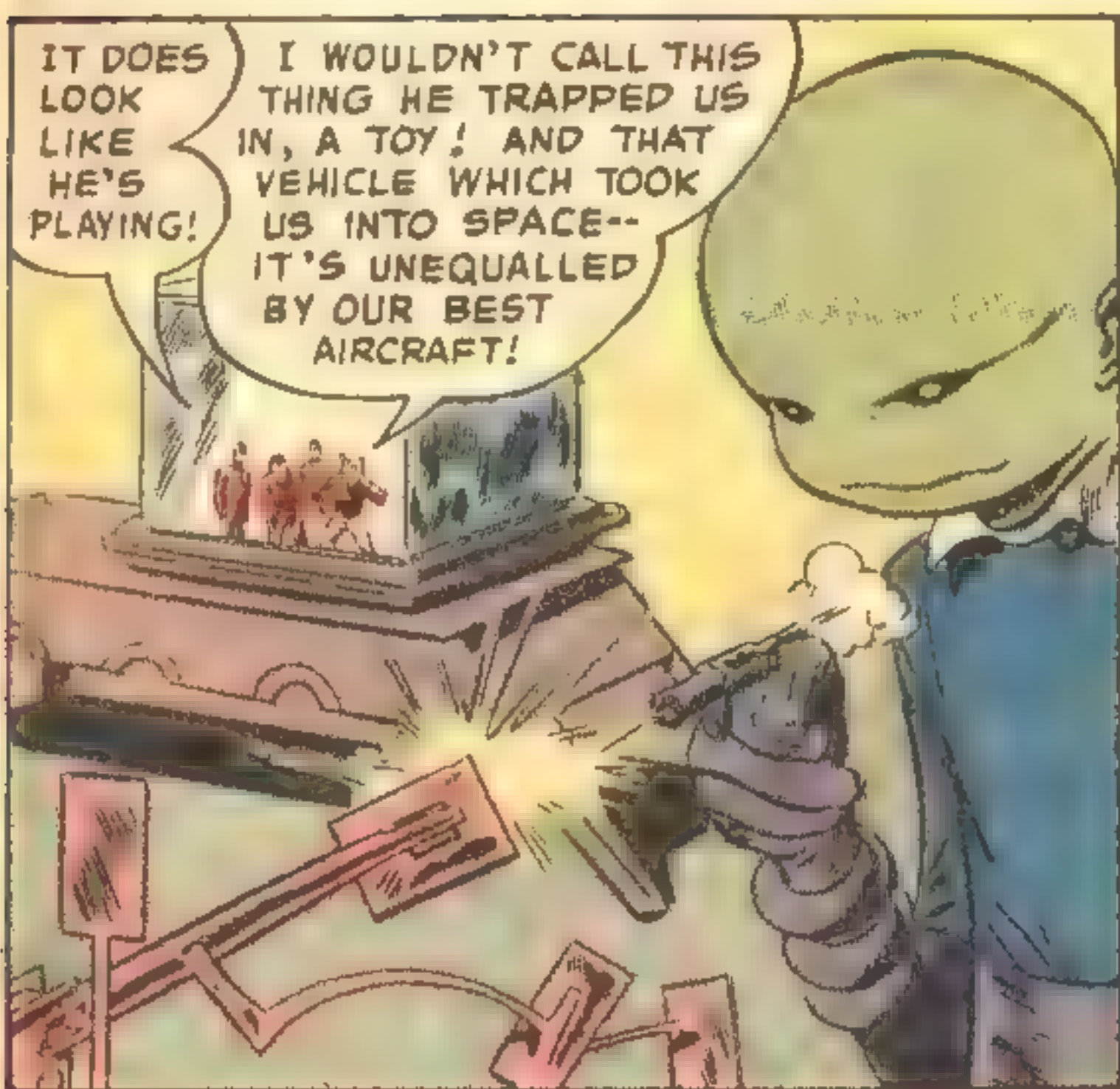
THAT LOOKS LIKE FOOD AND WATER! AT LEAST, HE INTENDS TO KEEP US ALIVE!

YES, AS PRISONERS ON A PLANET FAR OUT IN SPACE!



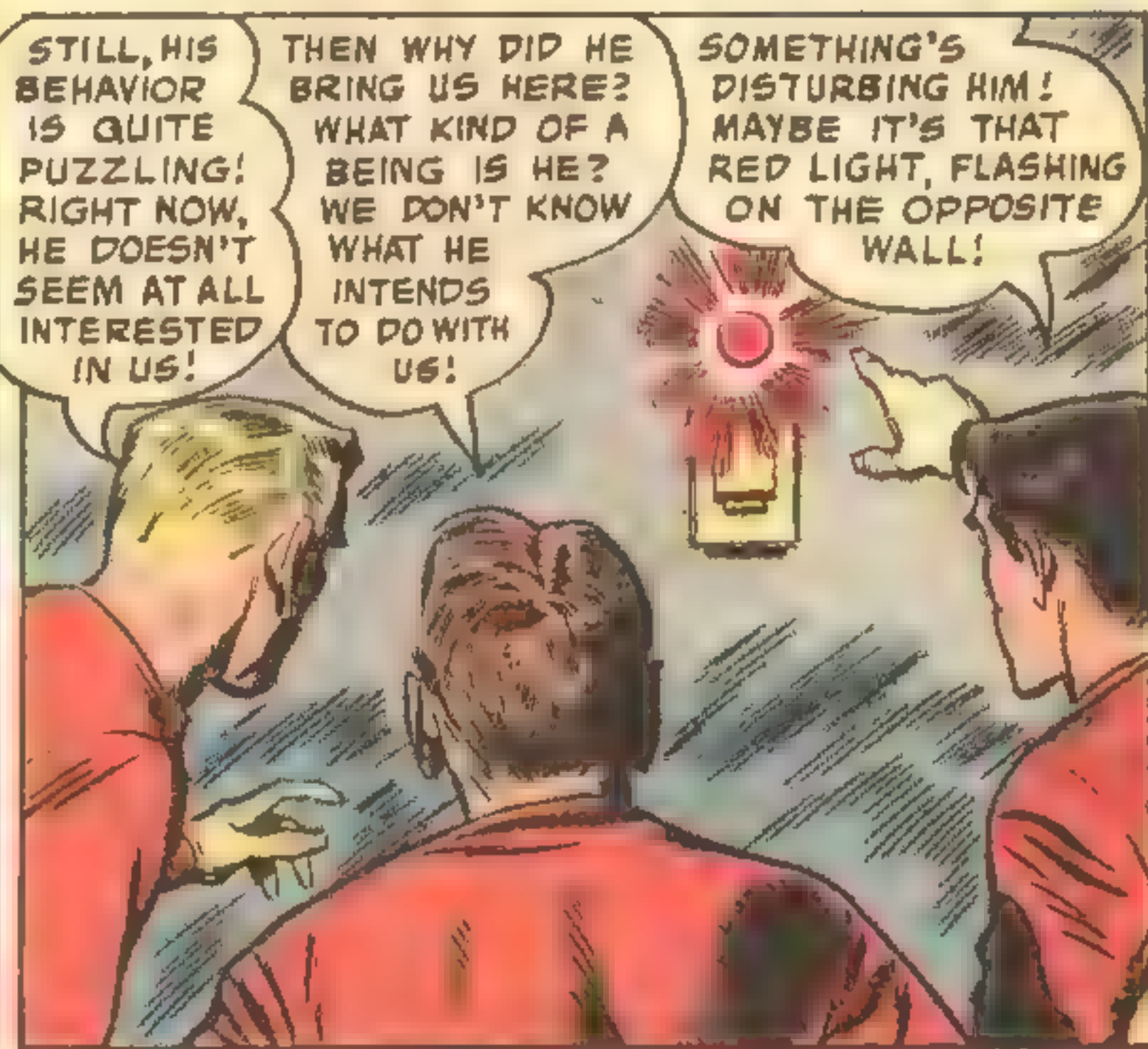
MAYBE HE'S MAKING A SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF US!

I DON'T THINK SO! THOSE OBJECTS LOOK MORE LIKE SOME KIND OF TOYS THAN SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS!



IT DOES LOOK LIKE HE'S PLAYING!

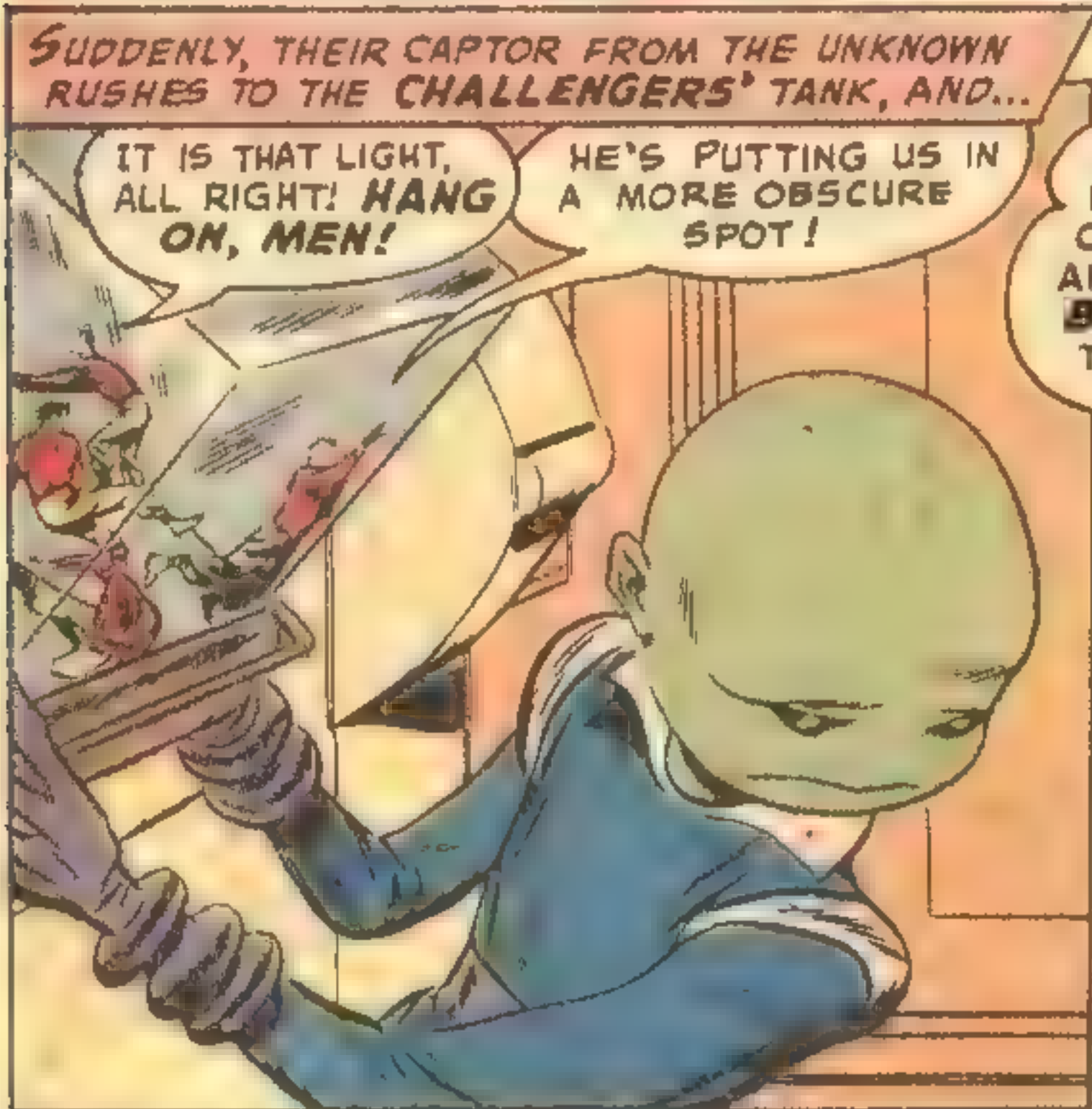
I WOULDN'T CALL THIS THING HE TRAPPED US IN, A TOY! AND THAT VEHICLE WHICH TOOK US INTO SPACE-- IT'S UNEQUALLED BY OUR BEST AIRCRAFT!



STILL, HIS BEHAVIOR IS QUITE PUZZLING! RIGHT NOW, HE DOESN'T SEEM AT ALL INTERESTED IN US!

THEN WHY DID HE BRING US HERE? WHAT KIND OF A BEING IS HE? WE DON'T KNOW WHAT HE INTENDS TO DO WITH US!

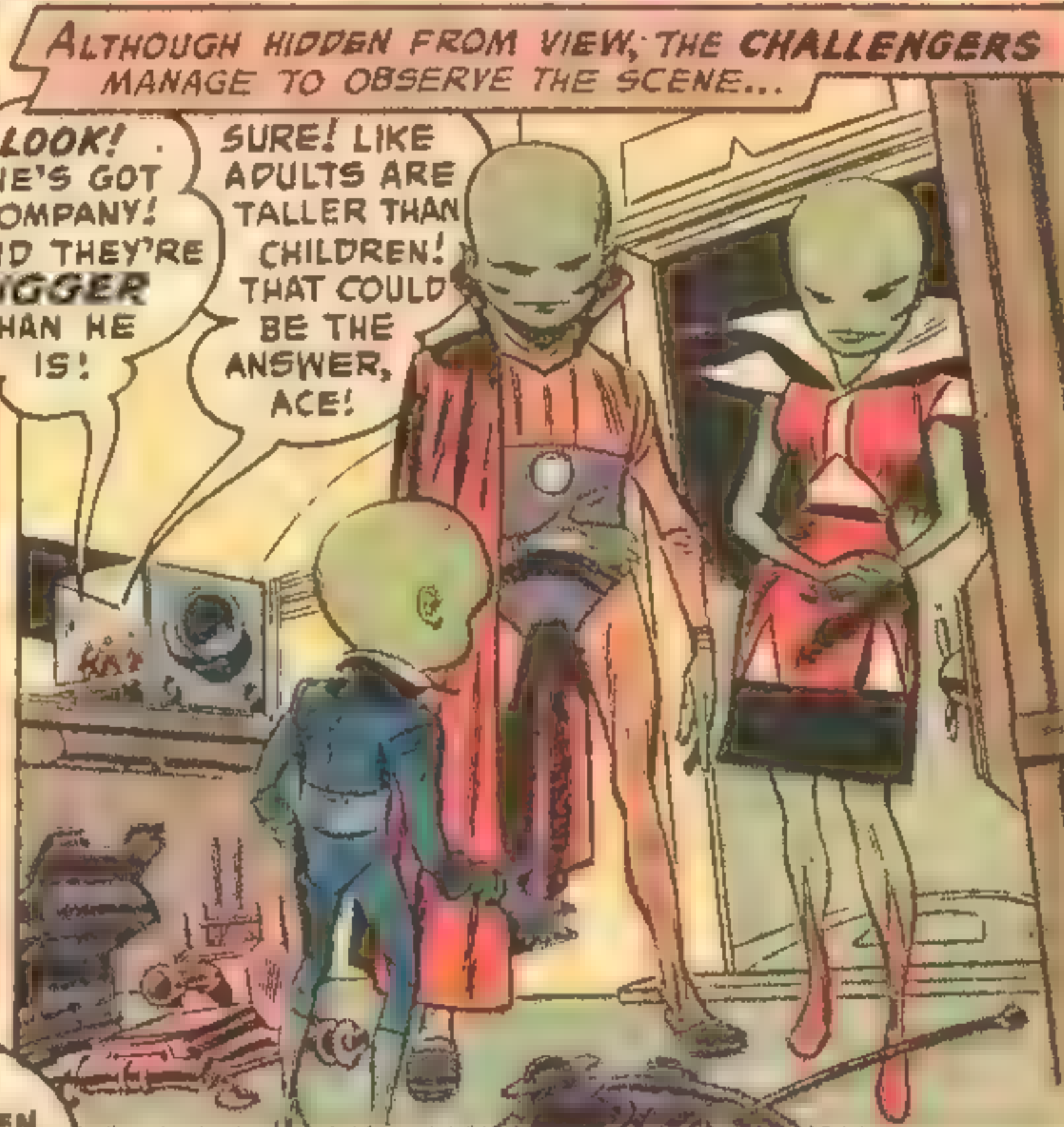
SOMETHING'S DISTURBING HIM! MAYBE IT'S THAT RED LIGHT, FLASHING ON THE OPPOSITE WALL!



SUDDENLY, THEIR CAPTOR FROM THE UNKNOWN RUSHES TO THE CHALLENGERS' TANK, AND...

IT IS THAT LIGHT, ALL RIGHT! **HANG ON, MEN!**

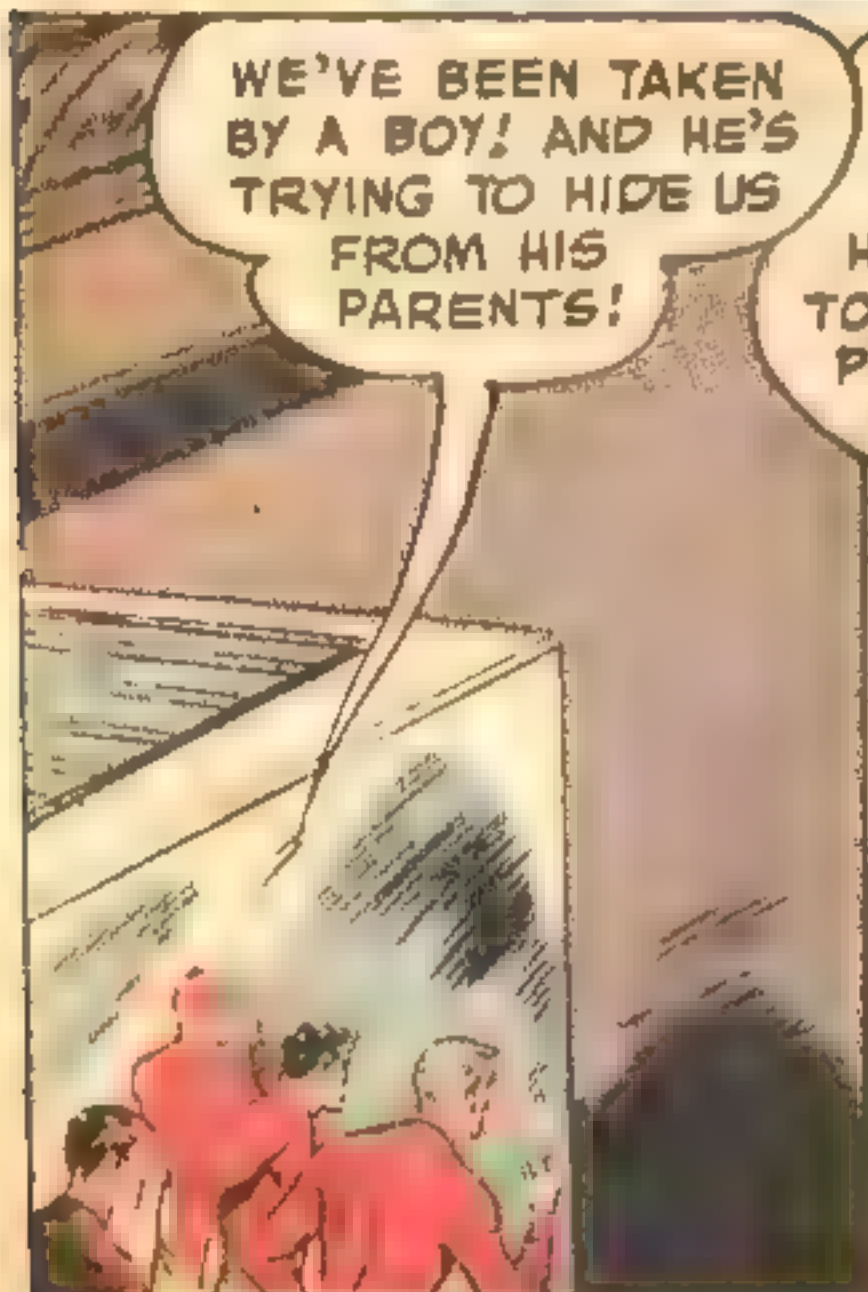
HE'S PUTTING US IN A MORE OBSCURE SPOT!



ALTHOUGH HIDDEN FROM VIEW, THE CHALLENGERS MANAGE TO OBSERVE THE SCENE...

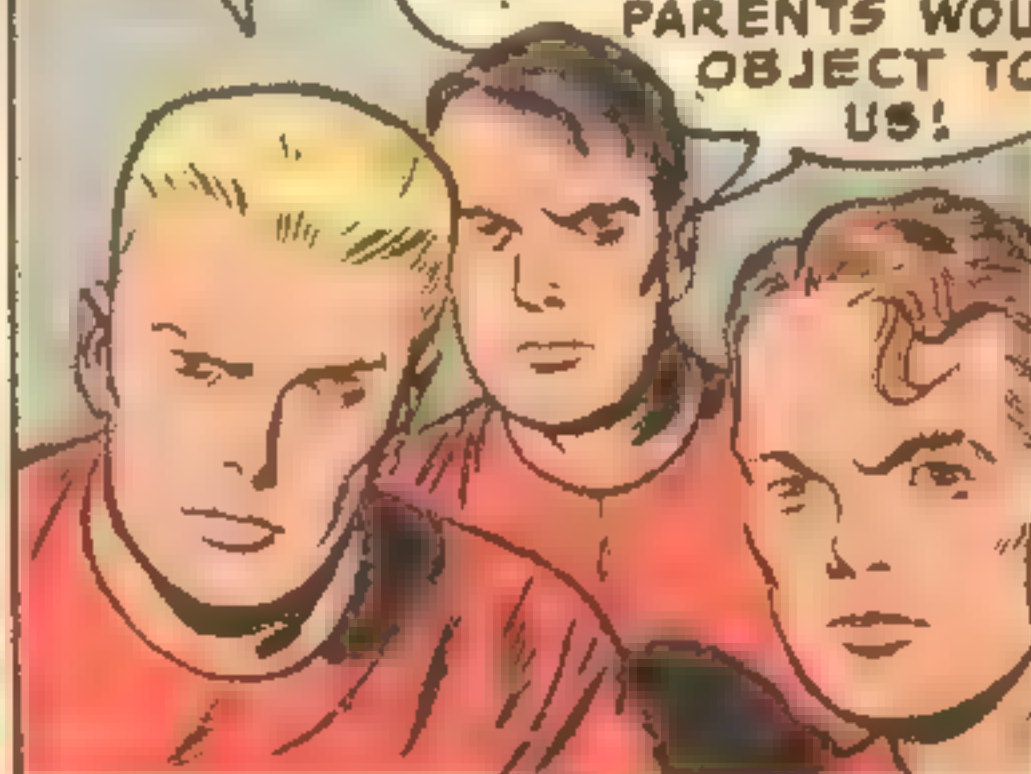
LOOK! HE'S GOT COMPANY! AND THEY'RE **BIGGER** THAN HE IS!

SURE! LIKE ADULTS ARE TALLER THAN CHILDREN! THAT COULD BE THE ANSWER, ACE!

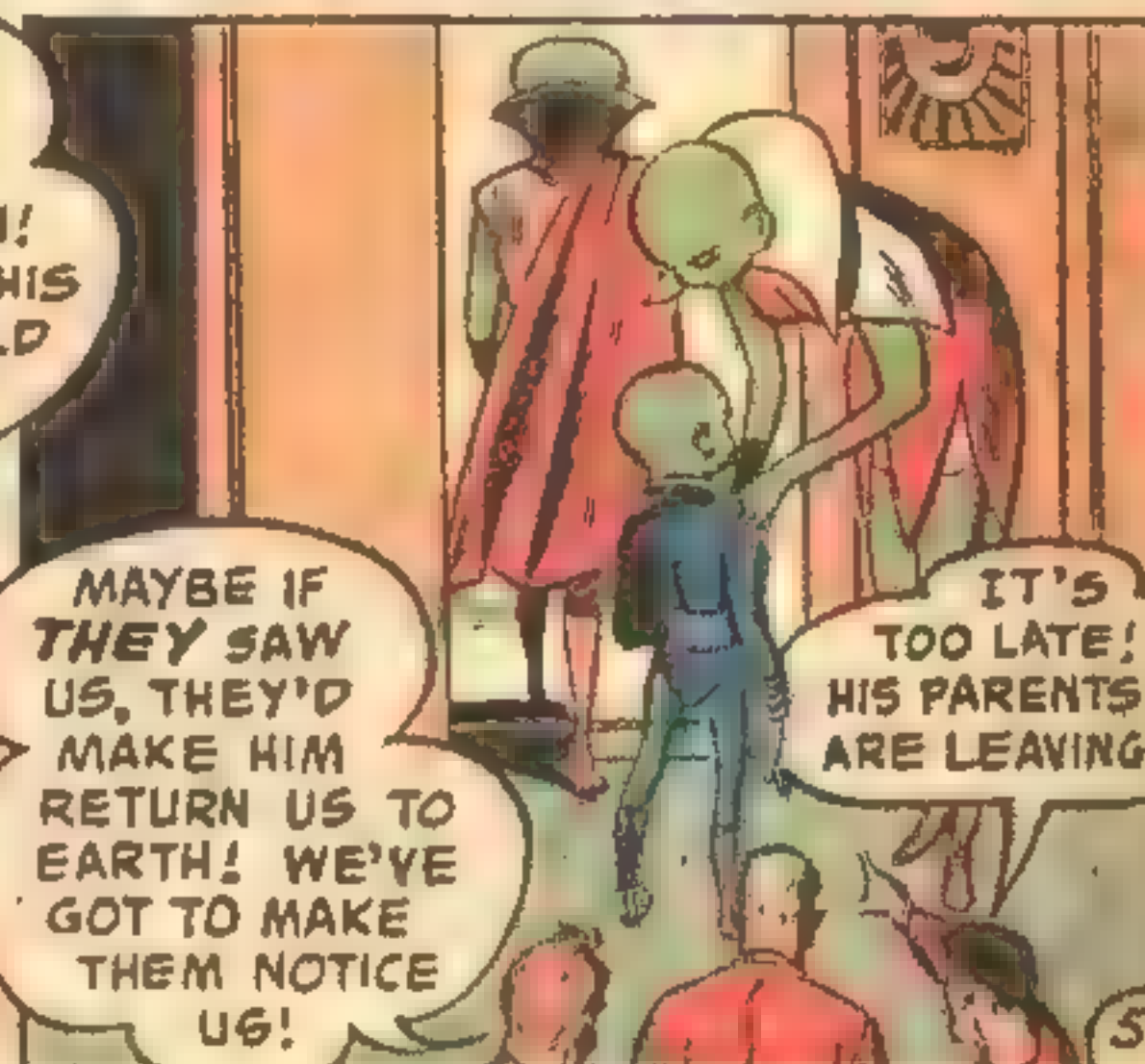


WE'VE BEEN TAKEN BY A BOY! AND HE'S TRYING TO HIDE US FROM HIS PARENTS!

IT ADDS UP! IT MAY SHOCK YOU GENTLEMEN, BUT WE WERE BROUGHT HERE FOR ONE PURPOSE-- TO BE KEPT AS PETS BY THAT CHILD!



PETS HE PICKED UP ON A WORLD THAT ISN'T EVEN HIS OWN! MAYBE THAT'S WHY HIS PARENTS WOULD OBJECT TO US!



MAYBE IF THEY SAW US, THEY'D MAKE HIM RETURN US TO EARTH! WE'VE GOT TO MAKE THEM NOTICE US!

IT'S TOO LATE! HIS PARENTS ARE LEAVING!

AND NO SOONER HAVE THE ADULTS GONE THAN...

THE KID'S TAKEN US OUT OF HIDING AND PUT US BACK IN OUR ORIGINAL SPOT...

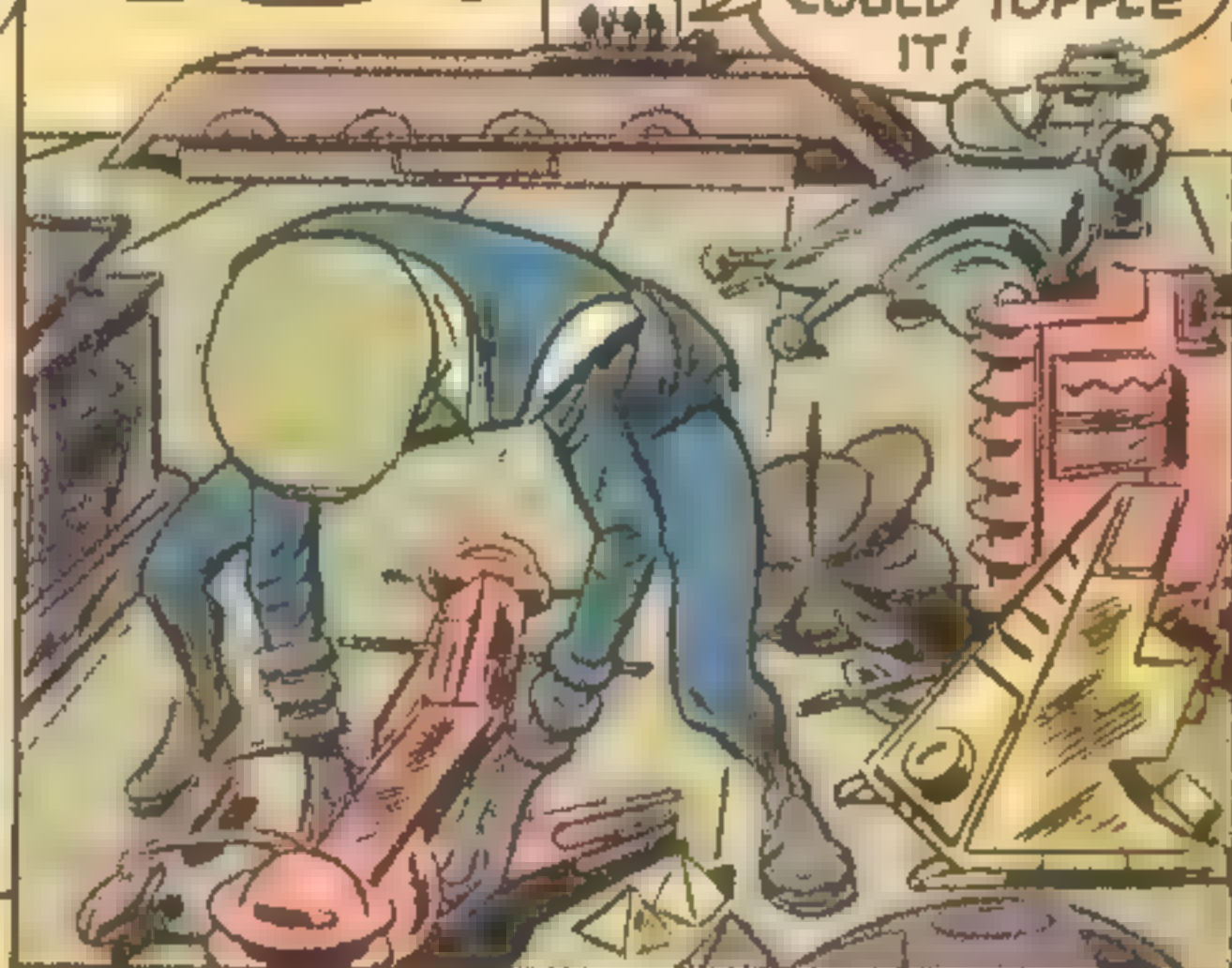
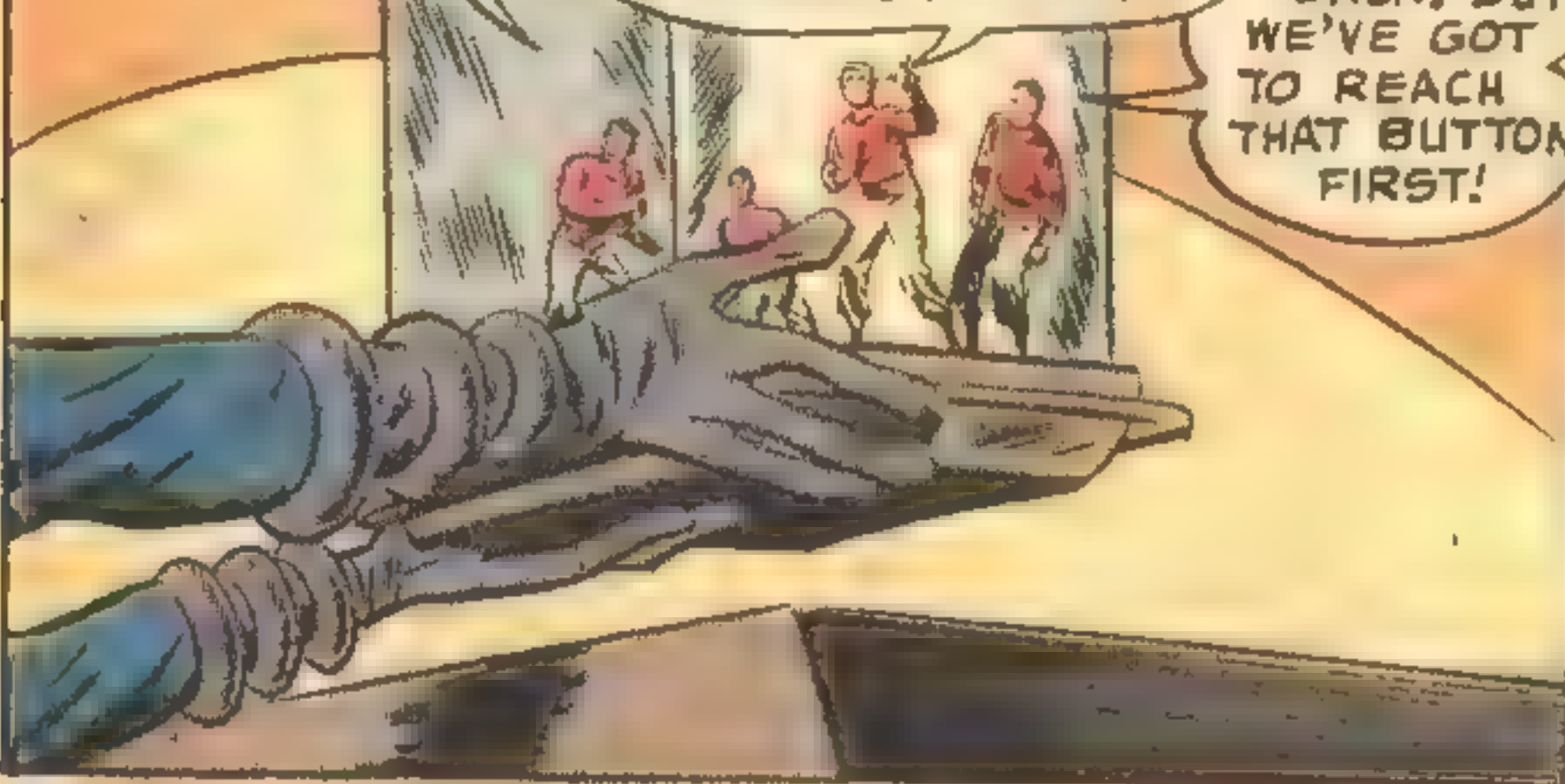
WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! LOOK--THERE'S A BUTTON UNDER THAT LIGHT ON THE OTHER WALL! MAYBE THAT'S THE WAY THE BOY AND HIS PARENTS SIGNAL EACH OTHER! IF WE CAN--

SAY, THAT MIGHT BE THE WAY TO BRING HIS FOLKS BACK! BUT WE'VE GOT TO REACH THAT BUTTON FIRST!

AS THE LAD'S ATTENTION IS DIVERTED BY ONE OF HIS STRANGE TOYS...

HE'S GOING OFF TO PLAY! THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO BREAK OUT! BUT **NOW?**

PETS HAVE ESCAPED BEFORE--WHEN THEIR CAGES TURNED OVER! IF THE FOUR OF US HIT ONE SIDE OF THIS CAGE TOGETHER, WE COULD TOPPLE IT!



UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT IS FOLLOWED SWIFTLY BY A CONCERTED RUSH TOWARD A CHOSEN SIDE OF THE CAGE...

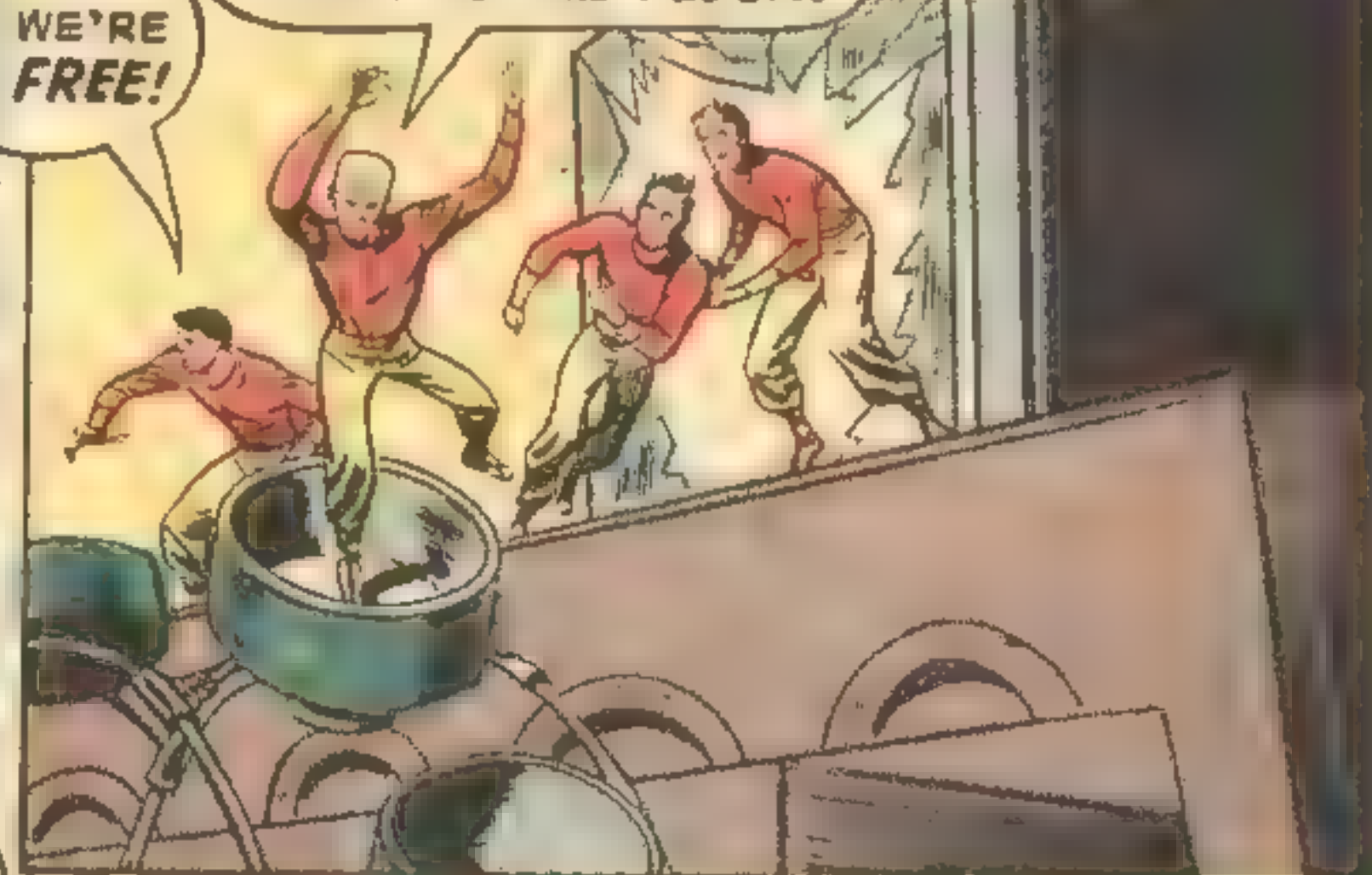
NOW! GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT!



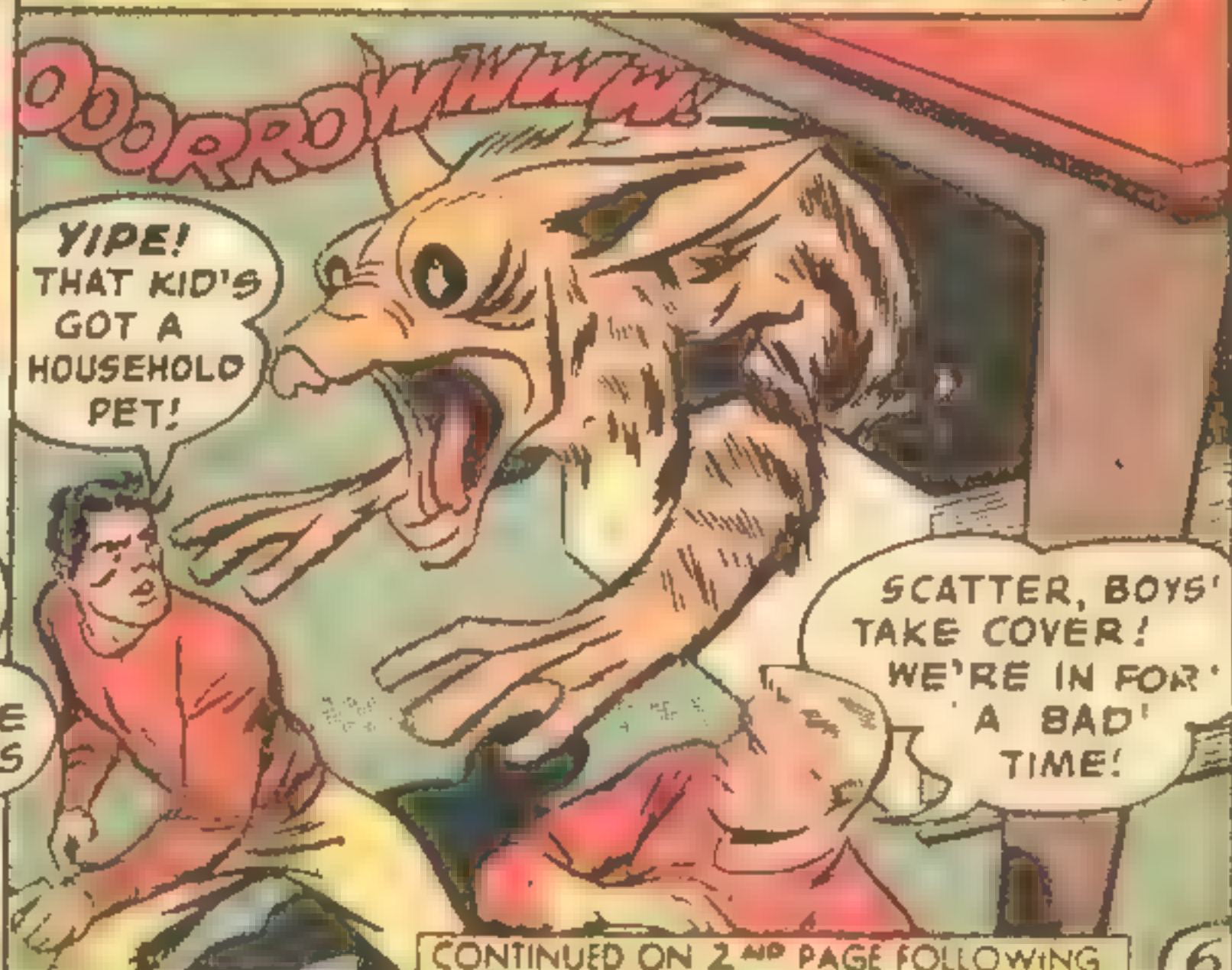
WITH A LOUD CRASH, THE CAGE FALLS OVER, ITS COVER LOOSENEED BY THE IMPACT!

WE'VE DONE IT! WE'RE **FREE!**

FOR THE MOMENT, PROF! QUICK! WE CAN USE THIS TOY TO GET DOWN TO THE FLOOR!



BUT THEIR FLIGHT COMES TO AN ABRUPT HALT...



YIPE! THAT KID'S GOT A HOUSEHOLD PET!

WHAT A RIDE! THIS IS BETTER THAN A ROLLER COASTER!

IT'LL GET US DOWN BEFORE THE KID REACHES US!

SCATTER, BOYS! TAKE COVER! WE'RE IN FOR A BAD TIME!



I DON'T CARE MUCH FOR THE CATS ON OTHER WORLDS!

AS THE GIANT BOY DASHES IN TO REGAIN CONTROL OF HIS ESCAPED PETS, THE CONFUSION MOUNTS...



NOW, THE KID'S AFTER US, TOO! WHAT A FIX!

QUICK! MAKE FOR THE NARROW OPENING UNDER THAT BIG CABINET!



NOT UNTIL I GIVE ROCKY AN ASSIST! THIS'LL BOWL IT OVER!



THANKS FOR RUNNING INTERFERENCE, RED! YOU SAVED MY NECK!

NOT UNTIL WE'VE JOINED PROF IN THAT MOUSEHOLE HE FOUND!



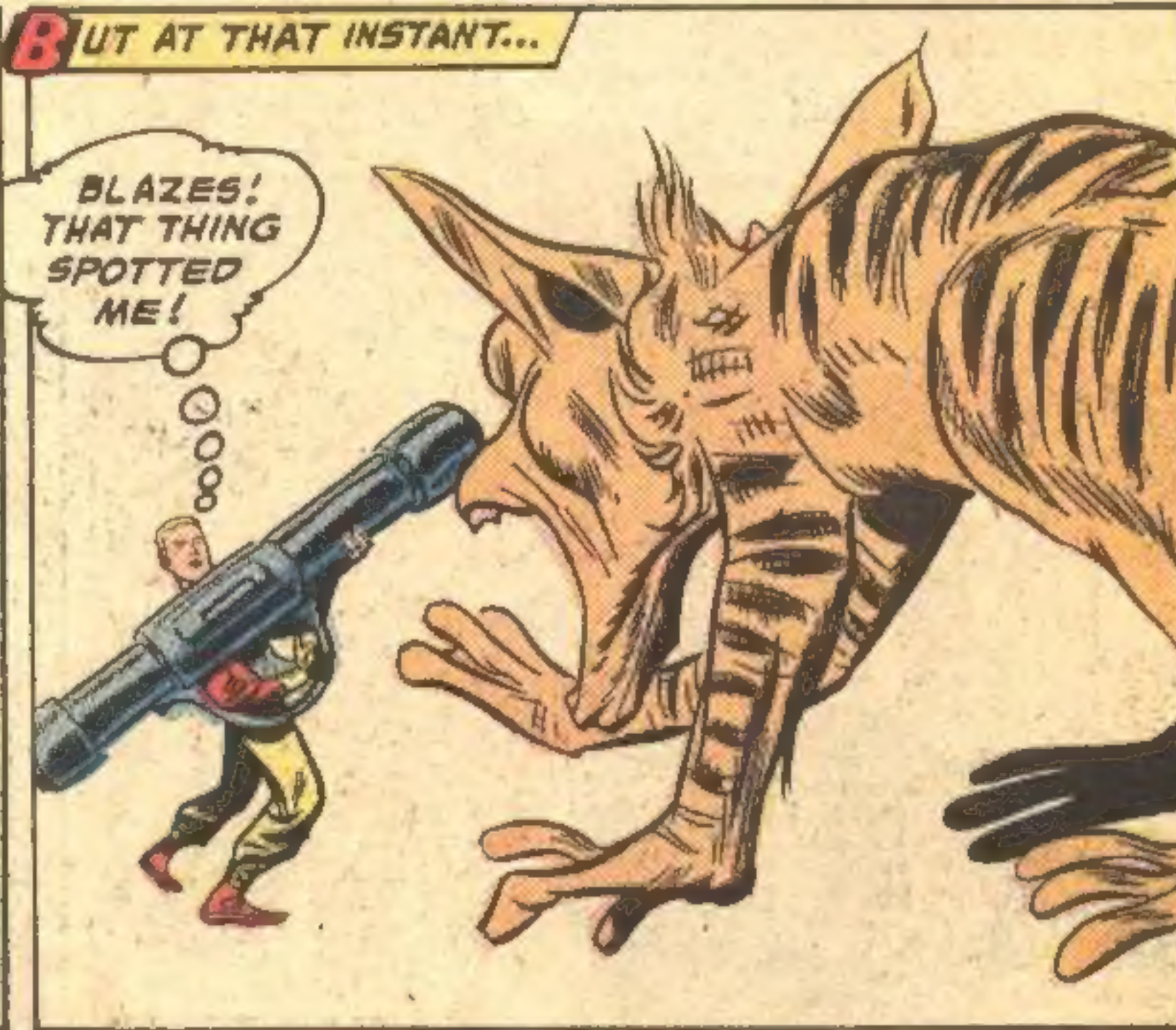
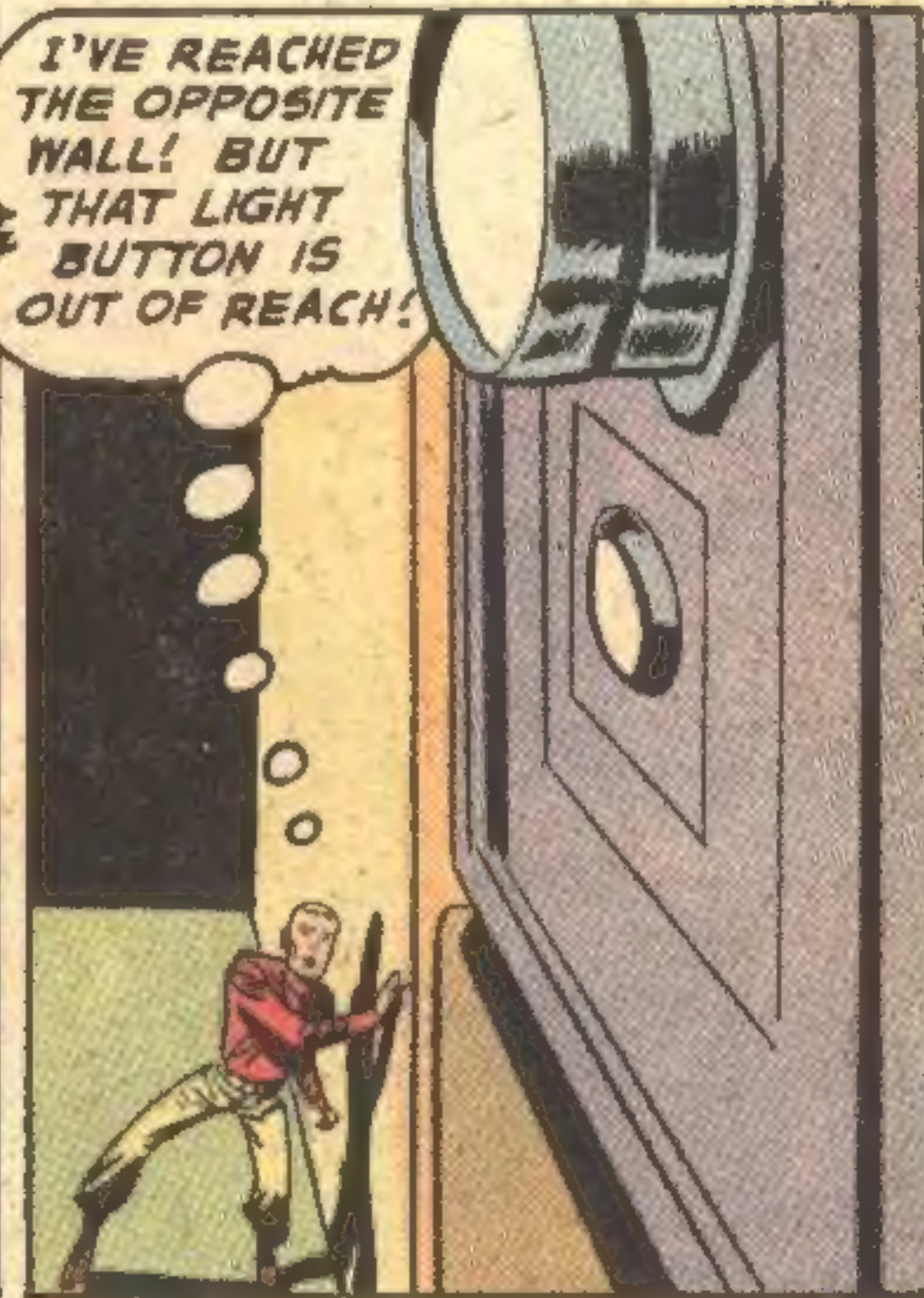
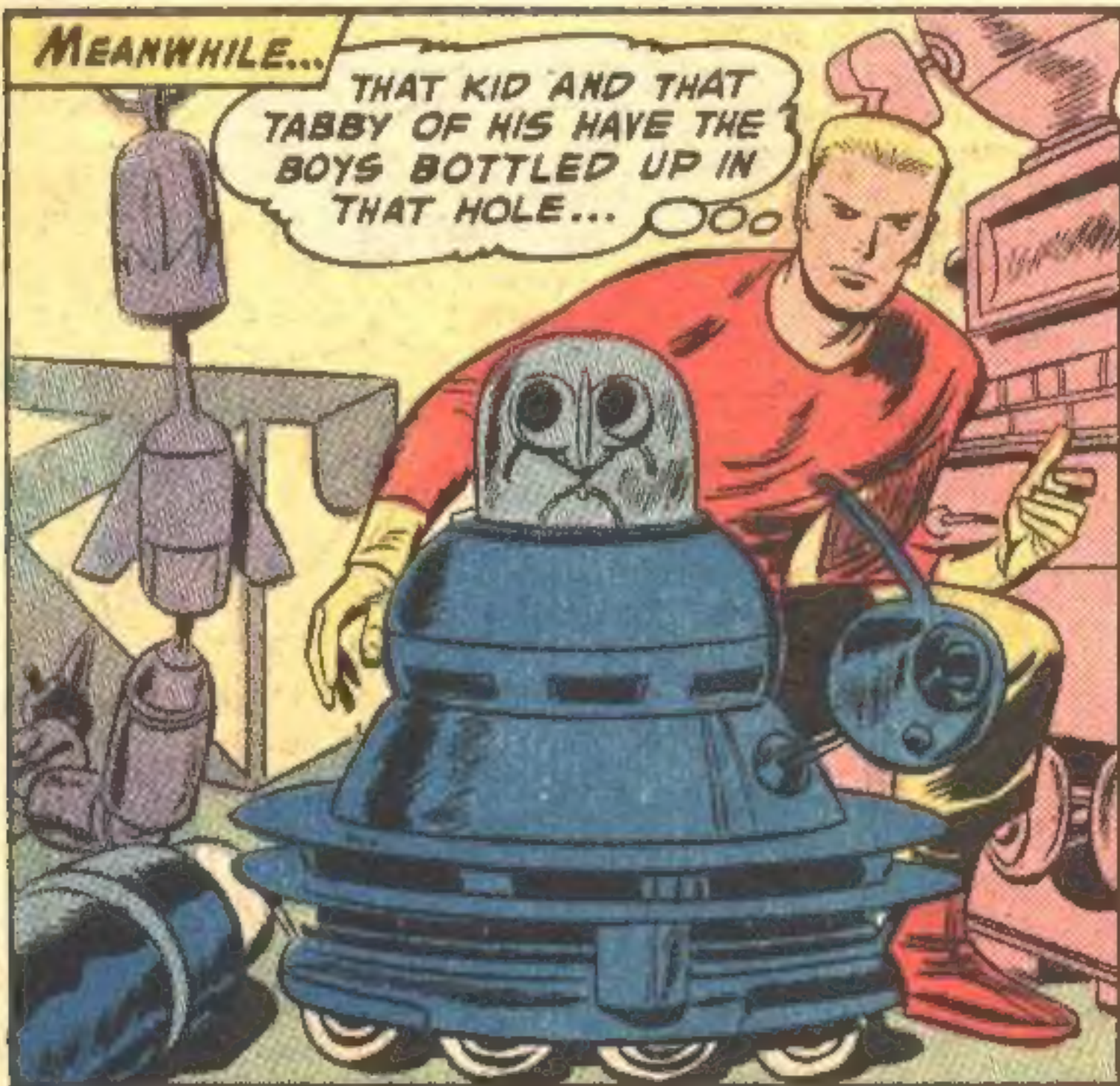
GOT YOU, ROCKY!

MADE IT!... AND NONE TOO SOON!



ACE! WHERE'S ACE?

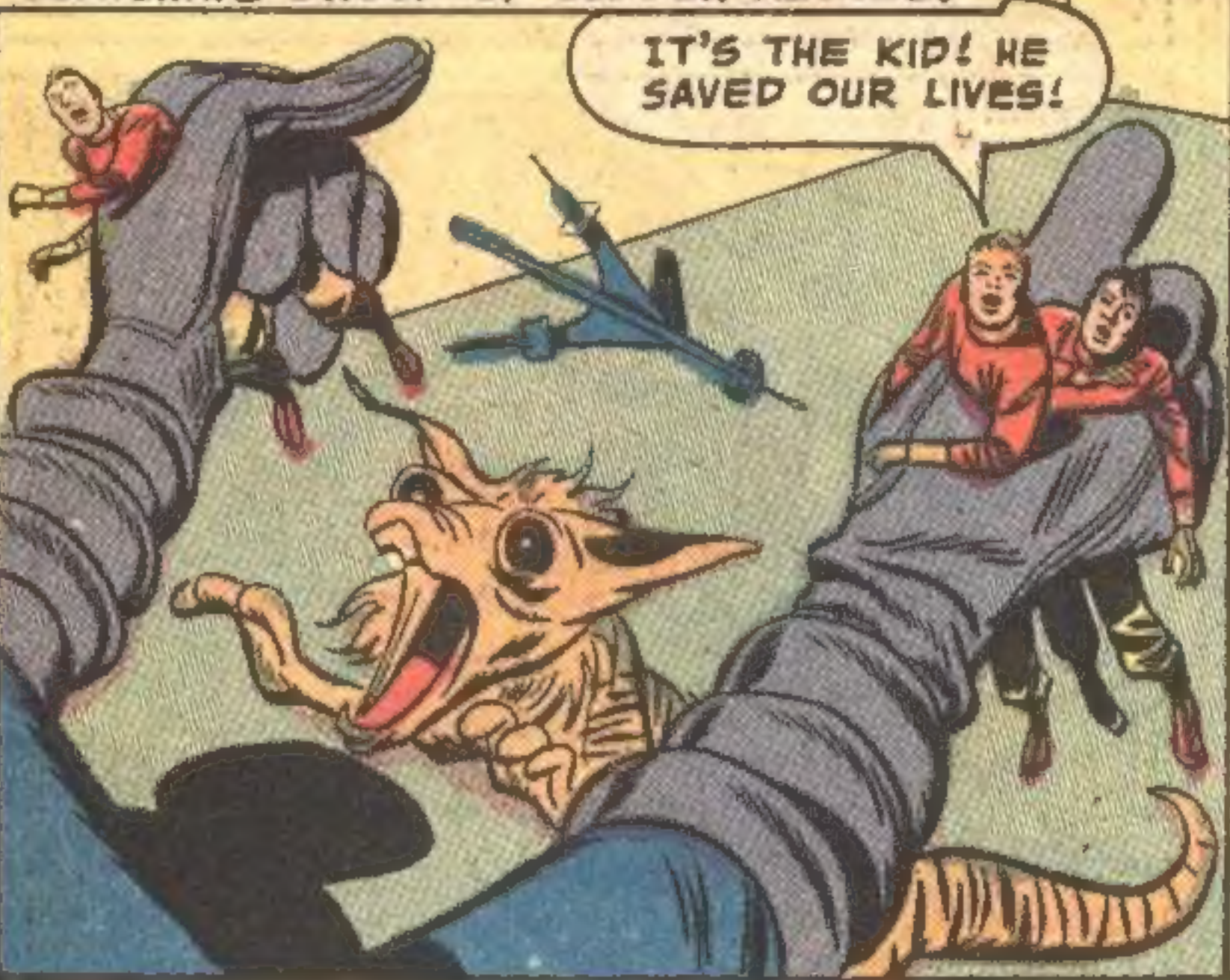
GOOD GRAVY! HE'S STILL OUT THERE--!



RISKING THEIR OWN LIVES, ROCKY, RED AND PROF ATTACK THE ALIEN ANIMAL!



BUT SWIFTER THAN THE ONRUSHING MENACE IS THE FORTUNATE SWOOP OF SUDDEN RESCUE!



HE'S LOOKING FOR ACE, NOW! IF HE RECAPTURES HIM, THE ATTEMPT TO SIGNAL HIS PARENTS WILL HAVE FAILED!



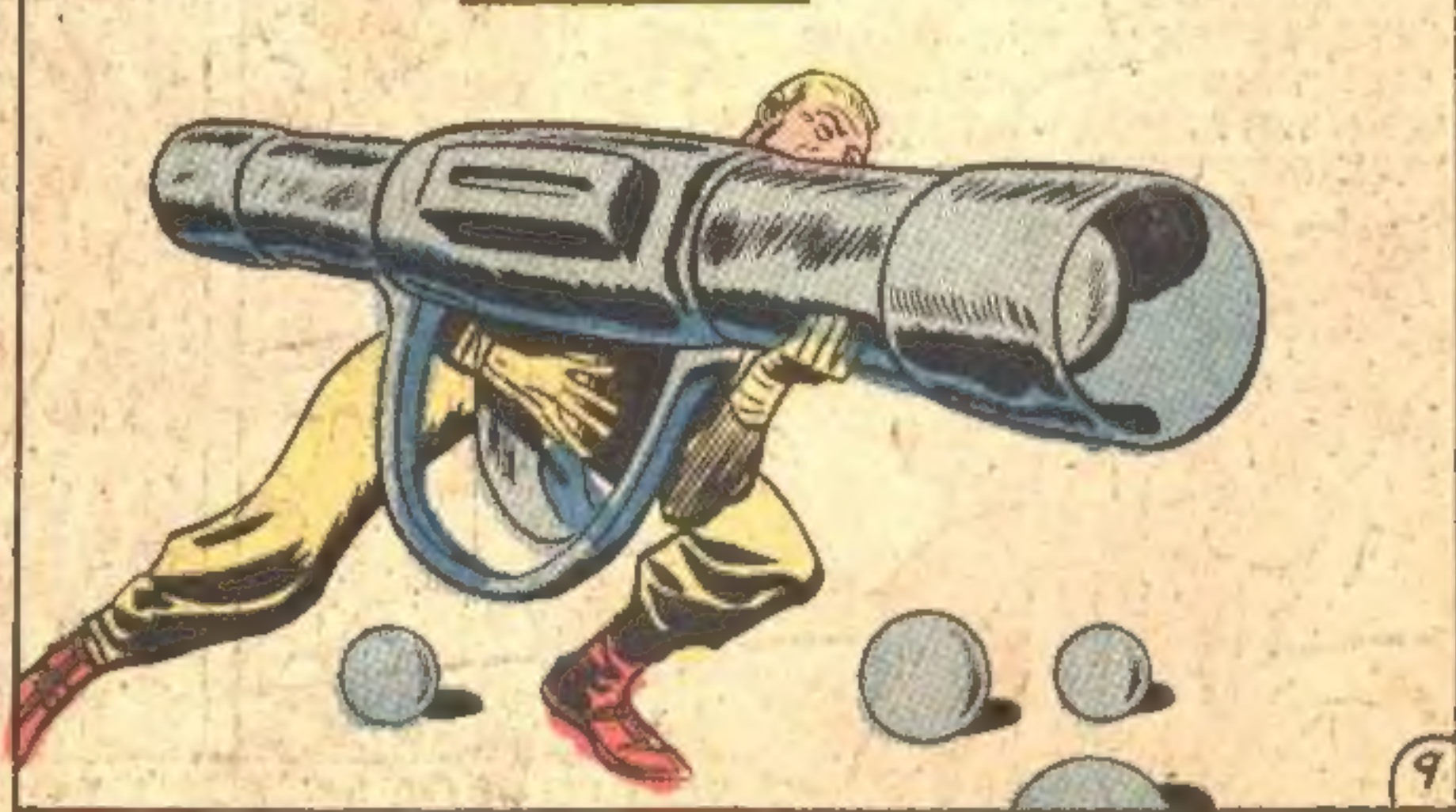
QUICKLY, THE ANIMAL TURNS ITS FURY UPON ITS ASSAILANTS...

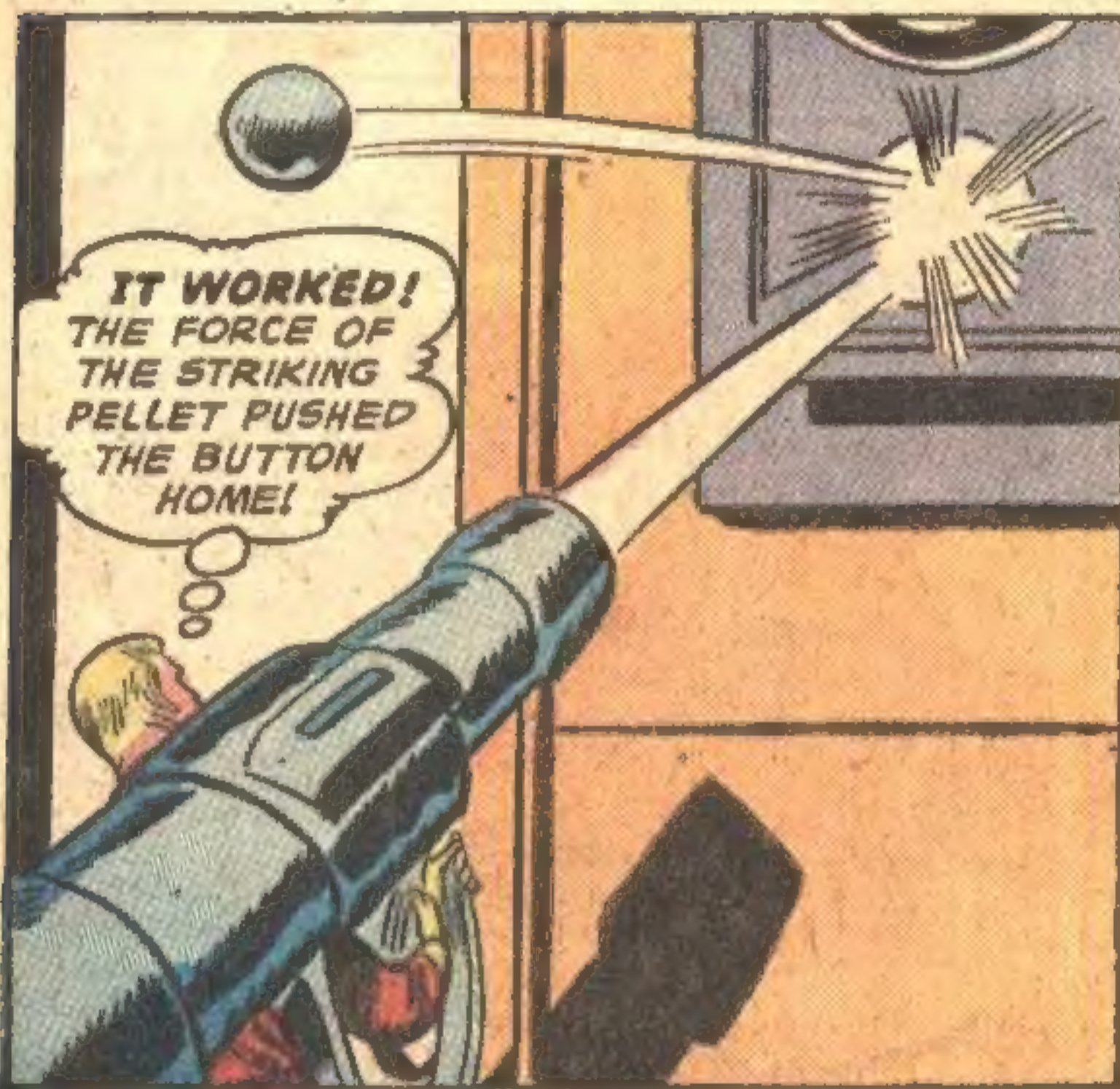


PLACING THE CHALLENGERS OUT OF DANGER, THE BOY RESTRAINS HIS HOUSEHOLD PET WITH A LEASH...



MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE ROOM, ACE STRUGGLES TO LIFT THE TOY...





IT WORKED!
THE FORCE OF
THE STRIKING
PELLET PUSHED
THE BUTTON
HOME!

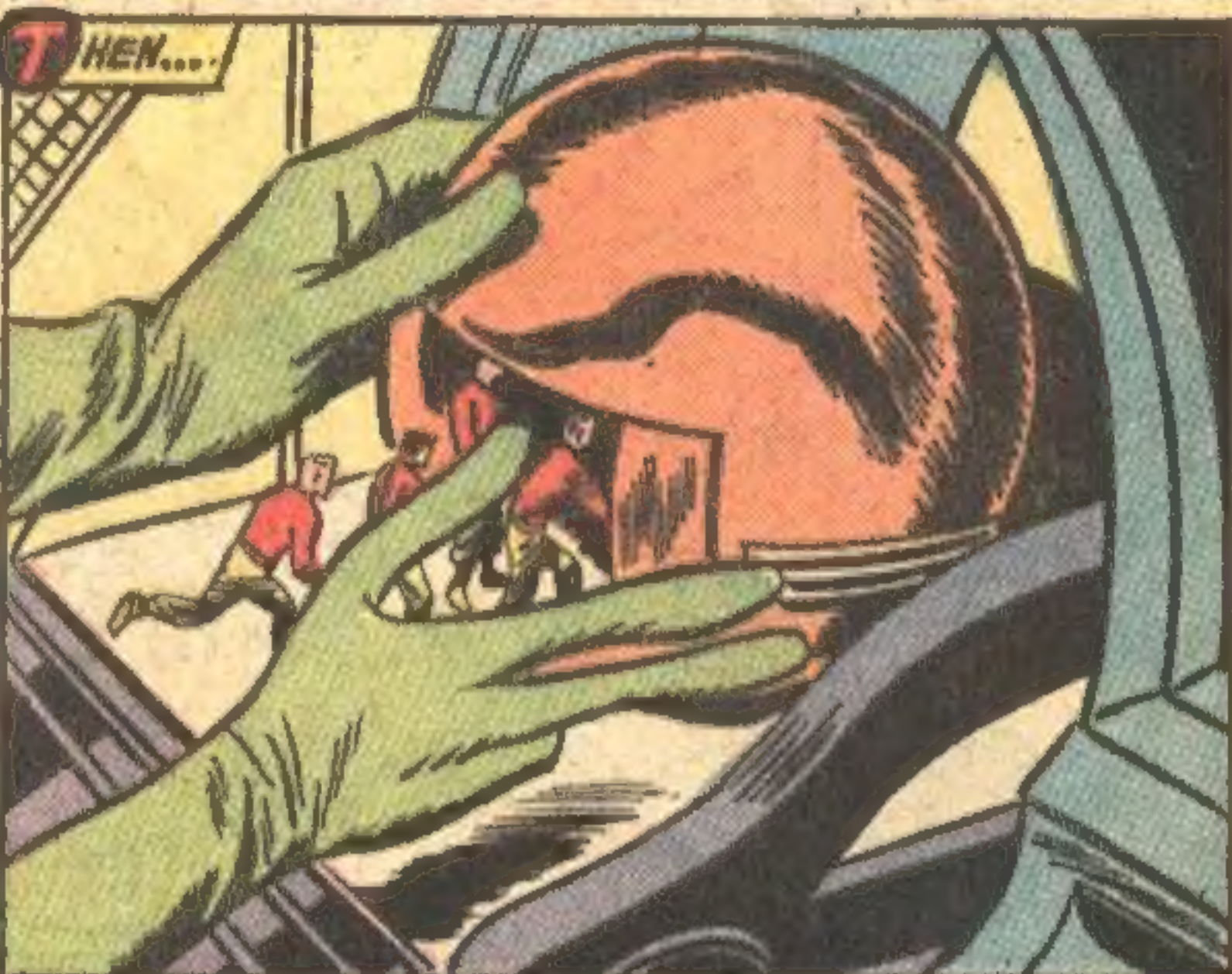
AS THE CHALLENGERS HOLD THEIR BREATH...



LOOK! HIS
FATHER MUST
BE SCOLDING
THE BOY!



SOMEWHERE IN THE SPACE HOUSEHOLD, A RED LIGHT
FLASHES-- AND IN ANSWER TO THE SIGNAL...



THEN...

SOON AFTER, THE CHALLENGERS RE-LIVE THEIR
MYSTERIOUS JOURNEY THROUGH SPACE, AND AS
THEY ARE DEPOSITED ON EARTH...



WE'RE BACK!
POPPA DIDN'T
LIKE STRANGE
PETS, AFTER
ALL! THERE
GOES THE SPHERE--
BACK INTO OUTER
SPACE!

IT WAS A NARROW
SQUEAK! WE MIGHT
HAVE HAD TO
SPEND OUR
LIVES IN
THAT TANK!



YEAH, BUT YOU KNOW, I FEEL KIND
OF SORRY FOR THAT POOR KID. HE
REALLY DIDN'T MEAN ANY HARM--
AND NOW HE'S IN
HOT WATER!

THE
END.